KHWĀN-i PUR NI'MAT

Khwan-i Pur Ni'mat

(A Table Laden with Good Things)

Maniri, Sharafat...

Translated by
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Dedicated

to

SYED HASAN ASKARI

Contents

Acknowledgements ix

Foreword xi

Introduction xv

The Translation xxi

Text of *Khwān-i Pur Ni'mat* 1—168

First Assembly 3
Second Assembly 8
Third Assembly 9
Fourth Assembly 12
Fifth Assembly 15
Sixth Assembly 16
Seventh Assembly 23
Eighth Assembly 31
Ninth Assembly 37
Tenth Assembly 39
Eleventh Assembly 41
Twelfth Assembly 43
Thirteenth Assembly 50
Fourteenth Assembly 53
Fifteenth Assembly 55
Sixteenth Assembly 57
Seventeenth Assembly 61
Eighteenth Assembly 65
Nineteenth Assembly 67
Twentieth Assembly 72
Twenty-First Assembly 80
Twenty-Second Assembly 82
Twenty-Third Assembly 84
Twenty-Fourth Assembly 87
Twenty-Fifth Assembly 91

Twenty-Sixth Assembly	95
Twenty-Seventh Assembly	98
Twenty-Eighth Assembly	99
Twenty-Ninth Assembly	101
Thirtieth Assembly	109
Thirty-First Assembly	111
Thirty-Second Assembly	113
Thirty-Third Assembly	114
Thirty-Fourth Assembly	115
Thirty-Fifth Assembly	118
Thirty-Sixth Assembly	121
Thirty-Seventh Assembly	125
Thirty-Eighth Assembly	132
Thirty-Ninth Assembly	137
Fortieth-Assembly	142
Forty-First Assembly	148
Forty-Second Assembly	153
Forty-Third Assembly	156
Forty-Fourth Assembly	160
Forty-Fifth Assembly	161
Forty-Sixth Assembly	165
Forty-Seventh Assembly	167
Index	169
Errata	175

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P.J.
Patna

Foreword

When I first met Paul Jackson, he told me how disappointed he had been when he glanced through my book *Mystical Dimensions of Islam* and did not find the name of Sharafuddin Maneri in the index. And after we had visited together the sacred places of Maner Sharif and Bihar Sharif, I could fully understand the reasons for his disappointment. All the more, as I had the good fortune to read his dissertation on his favorite Muslim saint, and could be of some help in the publication of his valuable translation of Maneri's *Hundred Letters* in New York.

The fact that the *Hundred Letters*, for which Hazrat Sharafuddin Maneri is rightly famed, could be published in a series concerned primarily with Western Spirituality, speaks for itself. It shows that the educational values which the great saint of Bihar taught in the fourteenth century are valid and acceptable even today, acceptable not only for Muslims but also for readers in the Christian tradition.

But who was this teacher, who was honoured by the epithet *Makhdum al-Mulk*, "the one whom the kingdom serves", and whose spiritual strength and influence was so great that no fewer than nine collections of *malfūzāt* are devoted to him? Furthermore, it is well known that Muhammad Tughluq, the king of Delhi, asked him to produce a guidebook on Sufism for himself, and his writings were admired by such different personalities as Akbar and Aurangzeb in the Moghul period, a time when his works were also taught in the madrasas of the Empire. To assess his role properly, we have to see Sharafuddin Maneri (d. 1381) in the context of religious history in his time and space.

He belonged to the Kubrawi order, which stems from Najmuddin Kubra, (d. 1220), a Centralasian mystical leader,

whose works show an amazing insight into the spiritual progress on the Sufi path—he was probably the first to write about the visions of light in different colours and shapes which the seeker may encounter on his way toward the Divine, and many of his teachings were elaborated by his disciples in the next two centuries. One of these was Najmuddin Daya Razi (d. 1256,) who left his Iranian homeland when the Mongol onslaught began in 1220, and sought and found shelter at the feet of the same king who some years later invited Maulana Rumi's father to Anatolia: the learned and cultured Sultan 'Ala'uddin Kaykabad of Konya.

Najmuddin Daya wrote a book that was one of the most widely read works of moderate mysticism in the later Middle Ages, the *Mirṣād al-'Ibād*, translated recently into English as 'The Path of God's Bondsmen to the Place of Return'. This book was used in both the Turkish and the Indian Sufi tradition and helped to spread the ideals of the Kubrawiyya. Later, 'Ala'uddaula Simnani (d. 1336) propagated the thought of the Kubrawis, and the person that is most interesting in connection with our Sharafuddin Maneri is Sayyid Ali Hamadhani (d. 1389), who came with 700 sayyids, as legend has it, to Kashmir and was instrumental in strengthening Islamic culture in the Kashmir Valley, which had only recently been Islamicized. Maneri and Hamadhani belong to the same generation, but while the Sayyid left his native Iran in the wake of Timur's invasions, Sharafuddin spent his early years in a province part of which had been under Sufi influence for more than a century, that is, in Bengal. It was there that he studied with the famous hadith-scholar Abu Taw'ama of Sonargaon, and he probably acquired his sober, law-bound attitude and his reliance on the model of the beloved Prophet in this environment.

There was much movement among the Sufis of northern India during those decades. Muhammad Tughluq's temporal shift of the capital to Deogir-Daulatabad had resulted, finally, in the development of a new Muslim state in the Deccan, and the subsequent spread of Sufi orders into the area of Gulbarga and Bijapur, the Bahmanid capital. Especially Gulbarga is important in this respact although the great Chishti saint connected with this place, Shah Muhammad Husaini known as

Gesudaraz, reached there only after 1400, that is, some twenty years after Sharafuddin Maneri's death.

He may, however, have been in touch with him earlier when he, returning from his early years in the Daulatabad area, became one of the khalifas of Nasīruddin Chiragh-i Delhi. Gesudaraz is known, besides his poetical effusions, for his sober and law-bound commentaries on classical Sufi handbooks, and for his firm stand, in his correspondence with Ashraf Jahangir, in the question of *waḥdat al-wujūd*—he was one of those who spoke against Ibn Arabi's theories of the 'Unity of Being' as they became increasingly popular in the Indian subcontinent. Ashraf Jahangir of Kichhaucha, was almost a neighbour of Sharafuddin Maneri, for he, coming from the West like Sayyid Ali Hamadhani and perhaps in the company of the same group of Sayyids, settled in Kichhaucha in the eastern U.P., a place which had been inhabited by Yogis and which was also associated with strange spiritual powers. Sayyid Jahangir subdued them, and his hospice is still today visited by mentally disturbed or deranged people.

There was, however, one more spiritual center of Islam in the subcontinent during Sharafuddin Maneri's lifetime. That was Ucch Sharif at the border of the Punjab and Sind in present-day Pakistan. In Ucch, a family of Bukhari sayyids had settled at the turn of the thirteenth century after having enjoyed the instructions of the great Suhrawardi leader Baha'-uddin Zakariya of Multan and his descendants. Among the Bukhari sayyids of the mid-fourteenth century, Jalaluddin Makhdūm-i Jahaniyan was the leading authority, a man well versed in the traditional sciences, and a great scholar in *hadith*, but at the same time a master of fine political acumen, which enabled him to deal skillfully with Ferozshah Tughluq and bring about his reconciliation with the rulers of Sind. Makhdūm-i Jahaniyan was a frequent traveller, who performed numerous pilgrimages to Mecca, and was called by his contemporaries *Jahangasht*, 'the one who wanders through the world'. He constitutes the high point of the Suhrawardi tradition in the western part of the subcontinent, and there are many relations between the Suhrawardiyya and the Kubrawiyya, both of them being 'sober' orders. It is also interesting to see that the three

contemporaries, Makdhūm-i Jahaniyan, Sayyid Ali Hamadhani, and Sharafuddin Maneri, were largely interested not in a fruitless asceticism but devoted their energies to the guidance of rulers and to the education of a good number of disçiples. They were devoted teachers of noble behaviour as it was taught by the Qur'an and by the Prophet, and it is not astonishing that Sharafuddin Maneri wrote a commentary on the classical handbook of Sufi etiquette, Abu Najib as-Suhrawardi's *Adāb al-murīdīn*, which, along with the *'Awārif al-Ma'ārif* of the younger Suhrawardi, Abu Najib's nephew, was a cornerstone for Sufi ethics in the Middle Ages. Thus, Sharafuddin Maneri emerges as a mystical leader of lasting influence, a man who, like his contemporaries in the different corners of the subcontinent, was deeply devoted to the cause of guiding mankind, masses and rulers alike, on the right path of it had been taught by the Qur'an and through the Prophet, a path that finds its fulfilment in loving service to God and humanity. No miracle working, no poetical effusions or dry theoretical statements are typical of Sharafuddin Maneri, but the practical aspect of Sufism prevails, and that is the reason why he appeals even today to many who would mock the enthusiastic verses of other Persian-writing Sufis or would refuse to enter into the subtle discussions of the Necessary Existent and the Contingent, of qualifications of God's qualities, or other hair-splitting distinctions in which many Sufi's of the fourteenth century indulged.

Sharafuddin Maneri, therefore, remains one of those figures whose message appeals to everyone who is sensitive to religious experience and knows how to heed the voice of the heart. Readers in East and West will be grateful to Dr. Jackson that he has devoted his scholarly work to this great saint of bygone times and has made him alive for them. It is a great contribution to a better understanding between religions and a model for further research into the history of spiritual Islam.

Annemarie Schimmel
Harvard University

Introduction

The present work, *Khwān-i Pur Ni'mat*, belongs to the *malfūẓ* genre of Sufi literature, i.e., a record of what occurred during the assemblies presided over by the Sufi Master. The main content of works of this genre consists of questions put to the Master and the answers received. This type of Sufi literature attained an early prominence in India on account of the great reluctance of the early Chishti saints to put pen to paper. It was this reluctance which inspired Amir Hasan Sijzi to record an account of what was happening in the assemblies of Nizamuddin Auliya. This resulted in what is currently the best known and most highly esteemed *malfūẓ* produced in India, *Fawā'id ul-Fu'ād*.

It goes without saying, but nevertheless has to be pointed out, that the value of any such record depends not only on the quality of the teaching of the Sufi Master in question but also on the recorder's ability to understand what the Master says and record it accurately. Misunderstanding is such a common feature of ordinary living that the need to rectify misunderstandings is felt by most intelligent people. When it comes to a question which requires considerable spiritual perspicacity, there is a corresponding demand made upon the recorder to follow the line of thought as the Master elucidates the matter. In this respect Sharafuddin Maneri was very well served by the compiler of the present work, Zain Badr Arabi.

Zain had been well prepared for this task, for he had already supervised the making of copies of the celebrated *Hundred Letters* written to Qazi Shamsuddin of Chausa during 1346, and also the arrangement of the order of the letters. Not only this, he had already compiled a much longer *malfūẓ* on Sharafuddin Maneri entitled *Ma'dan ul-Ma'ānī* (A Mine of Sublime Realities) referred to in Zain's own prefatory remarks to the present

volume. That painstaking work, elaborately described in its own preface, shows how closely Zain worked with Sharafuddin in the task of correcting and checking what he had written. All of this experience in getting to know the Master's mind, coupled with his own natural ability and earlier training, meant that he was in an excellent position to make a record of what transpired in the assemblies covering the years 1349-50.

One other result of the labour which preceded the recording of the present material is the fact that Zain has made a natural selection. Points which had already been thoroughly covered in the *Letters* and *Ma'dan* did not have to be examined in depth again.

A special feature of this type of literature is that it provides us with a spectrum of what was of interest to the people who attended the assemblies and put questions to the Master. It is the varying interests of people, not what is uppermost on the Master's mind, which dictates the range of topics dealt with in a *malfūẓ*. The reader is thus enabled to make judgements about what was of interest, and what was not, for such people.

Coming to the work in question, it will be instructive to note some of its features. For the serious student of Sharafuddin's spiritual teaching, it is his handling of what may be called 'delicate' spiritual topics which is of supreme interest. In the seventh assembly, for example, he talks about the 'pain' involved in seeking God and in doing His work. He is describing what has to be classified as a mystical grace which has a twofold aspect: it indicates the deep union with God which has, in fact, already occurred; and it describes the resulting 'pain' of dissatisfaction with anybody or anything less than God. This is poles apart from ordinary dissatisfaction and cannot really be compared to it. Rather, it indicates a true appreciation for every person and every thing together with a sense of not being filled or fully satisfied. One finds other examples of discussions about such topics to which the reader's attention is drawn in the footnotes.

Very often, people are concerned, not with deep spiritual matters, but, with questions about certain practices: are they Islamic or not? Their minds would be put at rest if they could

find out if there was some basis for the practice, and the place to look for this would be in the Traditions. For the ordinary person, however, this was an impossible task, for he could not read Arabic to begin with, and even for the learned it was no easy matter to be conversant with the various collections of Traditions. Hence we find many people referring to some practice and then enquiring whether the Master had seen it anywhere. The most interesting example of this occurs in the sixth assembly when Sharafuddin relates how there had once been a great commotion in Sonargaon when some scholars had declared that it was forbidden to eat betel leaves because of the lime used. In the 35th assembly he is asked about the practice of placing one's thumbs over one's eyes upon hearing the name of the Prophet. He confesses he has not seen any tradition in that connection. There are many instances of such questions.

For many modern readers the actual difficulties raised may not be of as such interest as his exposition of principles of interpretation in the sixth assembly. Many could concur with his opinion even today, almost six and a half centuries later. This discussion, as well as others, serve to give us an insight into the state of Hadith studies of the period. This is necessarily a partial insight, for more material is available which can serve as the basis of still more refined judgements.

In addition to the central importance attributed to a thorough knowledge of the Qur'an and all its parts as the measure, par excellence, for correct hadith interpretation, the 39th assembly throws considerable light on the various Qur'anic commentaries that were available in Bihar in the mid-fourteenth century. Sharafuddin's own preference for a commentary in Persian by Imam Zahid is unexpected. He gives his reasons. His criticism of Razi's *Tafsīr-i Kabīr* is valuable not only for its objective content but also for what it tells us about Sharafuddin's whole outlook towards what might be termed 'religious scholarship'.

Of great value to any biographer of Sharafuddin Maneri are the personal reminiscences which are found scattered throughout the work. An example from his Sonargaon days—the betel-leaf incident—has already been referred to. In the same assembly we find a reference to one of the idiosyncrasies of his

teacher, Maulana Tau'ama. In addition to their intrinsic interest such reminiscences, when studied in conjunction with those gleaned from *Ma'dan* and other collections, can be strung together and projected against the known historical background of the period. In this way a credible biography of Sharafuddin Maneri can be produced. This method has been followed in the present writer's *The Way of a Sufi: Sharafuddin Maneri*, which contains the first attempt to produce a biographical sketch along these principles.

There is another aspect to such reminiscences. Often they are like lamps in an otherwise unilluminated period of Indian history. For example, Bengal under Sultan Shamsuddin Firuz Shah (1301-22) is known almost exclusively from numismatic evidence. Thus it is that Sharafuddin's reminiscences of his Sonargaon days enable us to have a glimpse of a number of aspects of life during that period. Hence, in addition to providing us with an historical background for Sharafuddin's life the known history of the period is itself augmented to a significant degree.

Although Sharafuddin's teacher in Sonargaon was Maulana Tau'ama and his spiritual guide in Delhi was Sheikh Najibuddin Firdausi, this does not mean that he was restricted to the influence of two men. In the 29th assembly he relates how he had been listening to Amir Fazil Balkhi's lectures on Qur'anic exegesis in Bengal, i.e. in Sonargaon. In the sixth assembly a certain Maulana Karimuddin mentions something he had heard from the lips of Maulana Ziauddin Sunami. In the twelfth chapter of *Ma'dan*, Sharafuddin mentions how he had heard something from him as well. This referred to his days in Delhi. We deduce that Sharafuddin was free to attend any lectures he wanted to in either Sonargaon or Delhi, and it is even quite likely that his teacher and guide had both encouraged him to benefit to the utmost from what was offering in the form of intellectual fare in the various religious sciences.

The Indian setting of the work comes across to the reader in a number of ways. The first is simply geographical in the form of references to places in India (i.e. the Indian sub-continent), e.g. Sonargaon, Lakhnauti, Arwal, Rajgir, Delhi etc. Another is the somewhat startling assertion, in the third assembly, that the

Prophet had performed his ritual prayer once upside down! The influence of yogic practices current at the time is evident in this statement. Betel leaves are just as common now as they were in Sharafuddin's time and there would certainly be a commotion today among the Muslims if someone were to tell them they were forbidden to eat them. Nevertheless it has to be freely admitted that it is the Islamic dimension which predominates in the work.

There are a few longer anecdotal pieces, e.g. about Asiya, Pharaoh's wife, in the first assembly; a long discourse on Moses in the twentieth; and an extraordinary account of how Imam Zahid composed his Persian commentary on the Qur'an. A modern reader, professionally trained as an historian, will find much to legitimately criticize in such stories. It has to be borne in mind, however, that Sharafuddin is not a professional historian. His interest in stories was purely didactic: do they teach us some thing about man's condition in relation to God or not? Our attention is meant to be drawn to the lesson found in such stories, not to historical inconsistencies. Where needed, Sharafuddin can be critical. For example, he is quite adamant in stating that any stories about a holy man which exceed the 'regulations and principles of the faith' must have been foisted on him by 'foolish disciples' (29th assembly). Elsewhere he shows clearly that he is aware of the process of how many 'fabricated' traditions came into existence.

There is an extremely interesting example of intra-mural theological pluralism in the final assembly. The compiler, Zain Badr Arabi, raises the implied problem of infidelity to the Qur'anic teaching about Paradise when Sufis—Sharafuddin himself being a notable inclusion—say they do not want Paradise but rather yearn to have the vision of God himself. Sharafuddin's answer to this is that there is no rejection of the Law or the Qur'an implied in this teaching, but rather a going beyond the realm of the Law to that of love. Nevertheless he acknowledges that the Sufis are in disagreement with many externalist scholars on this point.

Sufis themselves differ not only in the area of praxis—which is readily understandable—but most specifically in two general approaches known as *waḥdat ul wajūd* and *waḥdat ush-*

shuhūd. One may say that this distinction means the same as that between monism and monotheism, while others will object that this is an over-simplification—a perfectly valid objection! In actual fact the real view of each author can only be ascertained after a close examination of his writings. In the 45th assembly Sharafuddin indicates his 'monotheistic' position in contrast—so it seems—to Ibn Arabi's. He is even more explicit in stating his position in the very first of his *Hundred Letters*. Curiously enough, even though he seems to have Ibn Arabi in mind, his name is not mentioned here or in the first letter, nor has it been seen in any of his other writings. Perhaps he did not wish to criticize by name such an eminent person in the history of Sufism.

The Translation

The translation of *Khwān-i Pur Niʻmat* was based on three manuscripts from the Persian collection in the Khuda Bakhsh Oriental Public Library, Bankipore, Patna: nos. 2592, referred to as 'A'; 2462, 'B'; and 2940-1, 'C'. Then there was the printed version, produced by the Firdausi Khanqah, Bihar Sharif, in 1903, 'D'; and finally a photocopy of a manuscript from the Bodleian Library, no. 1263 in Sachau & Ethe, incorrectly called *Maʻdan ul-Maʻāni*, referred to as 'E'.

Preference was given to 'A', which was clearly the oldest of the MSS but, because the first and last folios were missing, no colophon or other clear indication of the date of the MS was available. 'B' is much more incomplete than 'A' and has no date. 'C' is dated 1660, while 'E' is 1661. Seeing that the printed verson is more widely available the assembly division found therein has been used in this translation.

Very little reference to variant readings is found in the footnotes. This does not mean that there were few variants, or that they were not studied. The variants were notcd and taken into account but the reader has not been provided with this processing but with the results obtained. All the MSS and the printed work contain errors of various kinds but, in any individual instance, one can be fairly certain of what the original most likely was. Moreover because it is a *malfūẓ* there is, so to say, an inherent defect in the sense that it is an abbreviated report of what was clear to the participants of the assembly but not necessarily so to us over six centuries later. The aim of the translator has been to strive to understand the original Persian and then produce an intelligible, but faithful, English rendition. It is simply a translation. It is offered in the hope that people of varying backgrounds might find at least parts of it of special interest.

Khwan-i Pur Ni'mat

(A Table Laden with Good Things)

In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate!

All praise belongs to God, and those with grateful hearts praise the Apostle, Muhammad, and all those associated with him. After this praise of God and Muhammad comes gratitude for the peerless discourses of the Master of the Age, the Honour of God, of Reality and of Religion.

After the completion of the first volume of the discourses of the Master, known as *Ma'dan ul-Ma'ānī* (A Mine of Sublime Realities), there was completed, from the 15th Sha'ban, 749 (8th Nov., 1348 A.D.) till the end of Shawwal, 751 (30th Dec., 1350 A.D.), whatever came into the defective hearing and deficient understanding of this Helpless One (i.e. Zain Badr Arabi).

By the favour of Divine Grace, either the very words themselves or their meaning have been utilized in the course of this book so that people might derive some profit from the study of its contents and be enabled to translate it into action, and be stirred to move ahead; and so that every perplexed person in need of the comfort of religion might be enabled to catch hold of the Lord of strength and attain the blessing of tranquillity, for this is a tray laden with blessings, a world filled with signs of mercy.

One can devour a world from this tray of unending blessings:
Poor Zain is content to be granted a crumb therefrom!

First Assembly

He (i.e. Zain) had the good fortune of kissing the ground. At that time, the Venerable Master—may God exalt him to great nearness—had been suffering from some debility in his blessed body for several days. He also had intermittent fever. Through the grace of God Most High he was restored to health. Ghalbak, the Afghan, came to enquire how he was. The Venerable Master graciously said: "I was granted relief for several days, then I was once again stretched on my bed of pain."

Afterwards he added: "Fever has a peculiar quality: it is no respecter of persons. Where does it come from? For several days I was overcome by it in order that I might realize what it is like. I did not realize I was going along well. A man is engrossed in his own work and affairs when suddenly it breaks out. It lays him low, just like a chicken which is trussed and thrust into a hen-coop. The very same things happens to him."

Afterwards he said: "A large number of renowned men even died of this affliction. The Apostle of God—may God's blessing and peace be upon him—was suffering from fever when he died."

Later, he continued: "It often results in death," and said: "There is no fixed time for death. It either comes at this time or at some other time. When it comes, there is no delay or postponement." He illustrated this with an anecdote. "One day, Solomon emerged from his cell and stood outside. All the devils were busily engaged in their allotted tasks. He noticed that the Angel of Death arrived at that moment with orders to the effect that he should take away his life. The Prophet Solomon said: 'May I have a short respite?'

He replied: 'No.'

He continued: 'Not even time enough to go to the women's quarters and bid them farewell?'

'No.'

'May I sit down?'

'No.'

The prophet Solomon rested his blessed breast upon a staff and exclaimed, 'God is Great.' The Angel of Death carried away his blessed soul."

When the Venerable Master reached these words, he said: "If the prophet Solomon received no respite, how can anybody else expect any?" He continued: "The prophet Solomon remained in this state for a whole year while the devils went about their own tasks and were engrossed in their own affairs. They thought that the prophet Solomon was still alive. All of them, out of awe of him, remained busily engaged but said to one another: 'The prophet is spending a long time in worship.' "

The Helpless One (i.e. Zain) enquired: "Weren't any of the bystanders or servants aware of this?"

He replied: "Well, no. Everybody thought that some divine revelation had been made manifest to the apostle of God and that he was engrossed in that. Afterwards white ants invaded the blessed staff, from the bottom to the middle. It was no longer able to bear the weight of his blessed breast. The staff snapped. He tumbled to the ground. At that moment it was learned what the real situation was. After that, all the devils dispersed and loudly proclaimed that the prophet Solomon was dead."[1]

A discussion arose about those who were already in heaven. Who were they?

The Venerable Master said: "There are three people bodily in heaven at the moment, two men and one woman. The first is the prophet Idris (Enoch); the second is the Beloved Carpenter (Jesus); but there is some disagreement as to who the woman is. Some say that it is Asiya, the wife of Pharaoh. Others have said that it is the Chaste Mary (mother of Jesus), but it is more correct to say that it is Asiya."[2]

After that he said, in great astonishment: "Glory be to God! To think that today, Pharaoh's wife is bodily in heaven!

What intellect or knowledge could reach this stage! So many thousands of prophets and saints have been reduced to dust while Pharaoh's wife has attained the distinction of being bodily in heaven."

A voice arose on all sides saying, O Sanai

In His school the sorrow of every trial is forgotten.

The Helpless One asked whether Asiya had any son or not.

The Venerable Master replied: "No, Pharaoh did not even have intercourse with her. God Most High preserved her in her virginal chastity. Whenever Pharaoh came for intercourse with her and thus fulfil his desire for her, God used to create a fairy that looked like her. Pharaoh used to think that he had achieved his purpose concerning her. In this way, God preserved her chastity."

The Helpless One enquired how Asiya had died.

He replied: "She was killed under torture inflicted upon her by Pharaoh. It happened in this way. Asiya had put her faith in Moses, but she kept her faith concealed. Pharaoh, however, had a sister who learnt of her conversion. She went into Pharaoh's presence and told him. Pharaoh went inside and summoned Asiya before him and asked whether she had put her faith in Moses. She did not conceal the fact but said, 'Yes.' Pharaoh said: 'Why have you embraced his faith? Don't you know about my punishments?'

She replied: 'I know.'

He said: 'I shall punish you.' She accepted the punishment, saying, 'Go ahead!'

Afterwards, Pharaoh brought before her goods and property, gold and silver, a kingdom and whatever might please her in order that she might turn back from her faith. Asiya accepted nothing, nor did she budge an inch from her position. At this stage, Pharaoh became desperate. He realized that she would not relent, and understood quite well that she would not turn back. He had Asiya brought into the courtyard for punishment at high noon. She was tortured in this fashion: five nails were driven into her; one in her chest, two in her hands and two in her feet. He also had her trampled upon as she lay on her back

in the courtyard and the nails were being driven in further. In the midst of her torture, Asiya prayed thus: 'Master, prepare a home for me in Paradise!' There was an immediate response to her prayer. The fact that she is now bodily in heaven indicates this clearly. No harm or injury befell her on account of the blessing of the reply to her prayer. She is safely in heaven."

He added: "The sages have said of Asiya's prayer that her request to be with God is of great significance. It contains a secret, but it is necessary to suffer much in order to understand what that secret is. Ain ul-Quzat has written somewhere: 'The secret of this request will be made manifest on the Day of Resurrection.' "

Afterwards the Venerable Master exclaimed: "Glory be to God! What can be said about mystical knowledge and constancy! She was offered so many goods, properties, kingdoms, gold and silver, yet she did not deviate an inch. Man knows no limits. Something shines forth from the invisible world, yet how does this happen?"

Your work is dangerous, yet I undertake it: play the man!

I'll either be put to shame on your account, or lose my head.

Afterwards he opened his blessed lips and said: "For the sake of His own mercy, God gives a special call to whomsoever He wants. He did not say, 'The one who is detached from the world'; nor 'the one who amends his behaviour'; nor 'the one who prays'; nor 'the one whoacts justly'; 'nor the one who struggles with his carnal soul'. No, He said, 'the one He wants'. Whatever He wants to happen is what takes place."

Later on he added: "On the Day of Resurrection, when the emboldened see such women and observe their wealth of soul and labours, what will they do for themselves? They will wonder a hundred thousand times what they should do with their beards, and where they should hide, and where they should take their shame."

Raise aloft a gem-studded cross, loudly proclaiming, 'infidelity!'
I abhor my Sufi garb, and hanker for a sacred thread.
In gambling house and tavern corner,

I eagerly wager my carpet and sash.

The aforementioned Ghalbak said: "It has been related that whoever engages in this enterprise without knowledge either becomes an infidel or, at the end of his days, goes mad and dies. How can this be, for there are so many people without knowledge who have been engrossed in this work? Ultimately, everything was made manifest to them and they were numbered among the saints."

The Venerable Master replied: "Those who, without knowledge, have undertaken this work and become saints, first of all had knowledge infused into them. At that moment they were granted sainthood. God protect me from thinking that an ignorant man could become a saint! 'God has never made an ignorant man a saint.' The knowledge that was first infused into them was mystical knowledge. Knowledge of the Way was implanted within them without their having acquired it. This is, however, something special and is called a 'grace', while such a person is called a 'graced one'. Grace is a special mercy, and privileged ones are distinguished by means of it.[3]

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. Anecdotes are used to illustrate some spiritual teaching. Their value depends on how effectively they communicate the teaching of the Master, not on their historicity.

2. Christians believe that Mary, the mother of Jesus, was assumed bodily into heaven (thus the Catholic and Orthodox belief). It is surprising to note Sharafuddin's preference, and the extraordinary narrative presented in favour of his opinion.

3. The primacy of God's grace is a fundamental tenet of Sharafuddin's whole understanding of what the spiritual life is all about.

Second Assembly

He (i.e. Zain) was privileged to kiss the ground. One of those present in the honourable assembly—may he be eternally honoured—sneezed. The Helpless One said on this occasion: "What sense can there be in a person's saying 'Praise be to God' when he sneezes?"[1]

The Venerable Master replied: "Sneezing is a sign of good health, and good health is a blessing. People express their gratitude for blessings received. They do so on this occasion also."

The Helpless One asked: "Is it necessary to reply to the sneezer in such a way that he can hear it?"

He replied: "It is exactly analogous to the reply to a person's greeting. It should be such that he can hear it, but I have not seen any tradition concerning it."

The Helpless One enquired further: "If someone sneezes during the Friday prayer and says, 'Praise be to God!' should those who hear him reply in a loud voice or quietly?"

He replied: "Neither loudly nor quietly."

NOTE AND REFERENCE

1. It is interesting to note that the person who sneezes says, "Praise be to God," in contrast to the common "God bless you" familiar to English-speaking people.

Third Assembly[1]

Qazi Ashrafuddin said: "How many times did the Apostle perform his ritual prayer upside down?"[2]

The Venerable Master replied, "Once."

He further asked: "In that condition did he lean against anything or not?"

He replied: "I have not seen it described anywhere."

Again he enquired: "Did he do it as an ascetical practice or with some other motive?"

He answered: "A crisis had arisen. In order to overcome it he came forward with deep humility and utter helplessness. Moreover, the sheikhs who observe this practice do so in order to imitate the Apostle perfectly, in both word and deed, in order to obtain the promised reward of such imitation. Sustained by this hope, they strive, as far as they can, to imitate the words and deeds of the Apostle."

One of those present asked: "What was promised?"

He replied: "The word of God Almighty: 'If you love God, then follow me, and God will love you.' What they intend and desire is the love of God, and that is conjoined to the imitation of the Prophet."

Sheikh Mu'izzuddin—may his piety perdure—said: "It is related that Sheikh Abu Sa'id Abul-Khair said: 'I have accomplished whatever has come down to me from the sayings and deeds of the Messenger, apart from three things which I neither found, nor was sure about, nor performed. The things I was not sure about were as follows. I heard that the Apostle had eaten water melon, but did not know whether he had first broken it or cut it into pieces. Now, if one's sheikh follows both of these practices, one of them must be what the Apostle did. Imitation would consist in doing that.' "

The Venerable Master said: "Whatever has become lawful has obtained a lawful form. The requisite lawfulness of that thing is that very form which the Law-Giver has decreed for it. If the sheikh breaks and eats, it could be either that this was how the Apostle ate or not. If he ate in that fashion, it would be an Apostolic tradition. If he did not, it would be an innovation. A similar argument can be made if he cut it and ate it. We hold that, wherever a question involving Apostolic practice or innovation arises, it is preferable to refrain from following a particular practice than to introduce an innovation, for the following of such a practice involves the introduction of innovation. Thus a sheikh cannot take the initiative in this matter for, in performing a lawful action, he would be apprehensive that, by doing so, he might fall into innovation. Thus the saying of the Sheikh is correct."

Those present in the assembly said: "The intention of the Sheikh in this matter was to follow an Apostolic tradition, not to introduce an innovation—that would be merely incidental."

He replied: "Where there is an intention of following an Apostolic practice there should not be any innovation. Moreover, wherever there is an innovation opposing the Apostolic practice, the intention of following the latter is tantamount to intending the former."

Sheikh Mu'izzuddin continued: "Not following an Apostolic practice is a blameworthy act. It is not fitting to do such a thing."[3]

He said: "The fault involved in not following an Apostolic practice is less than that involved in introducing an innovation, for the former is not so blameworthy, while the latter is strictly forbidden and will be punished."

He continued: "Wherever obligatory[4] action and an innovation are involved, there one has to do what is obligatory, not turn aside from it. In this situation, why should he abandon what is obligatory?"

He replied: "There is a total prohibition with respect to the introduction of innovations, but there is none referring simply to the non-performance of some obligatory action."

The Helpless One enquired: "Have you noticed any injunctions of the Law with respect to this matter?"

He replied: "When someone performs a ritual prayer of four cycles, it is necessary to remain seated after completing two cycles. If at this stage a doubt arises as to whether he has completed two or three cycles then, if he remains seated, thinking it is the second cycle, it might be that it is the third. To remain seated would be an innovation. Here the order is the same: 'Refrain from what is worthy!' He will get up and perform another cycle of prayer so that innovation may find no entrance."

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. Each assembly is normally introduced by an expression such as, "He had the felicity of kissing the blessed feet." It simply means that Zain Badr Arabi considers himself fortunate to have been present for the particular assembly. It is omitted in this, and subsequent assemblies.

2. It is hard to see how orthodox scholars from Arab lands could possibly agree with this statement. It does tell us, however, that the practice was known to Sharafuddin and his contemporaries, and is one of the many examples of the influence of Hindu ascetical practices on the Sufis. Sharafuddin feels obliged to offer an explanation of the practice which links it to that of Muhammad.

3. It is easy to see that Sharafuddin's listeners have not been convinced by his line of argument. The whole issue of the perfect imitation of the Prophet is a burning one for Muslims. This discussion is most instructive in helping the modern reader grasp the mentality of a person who might be dubbed a conservative religious leader. Certainly Sharafuddin is conservative when it comes to anything connected with the Prophet, for whom he has an intense personal love. This is obviously operative in the present discussion. In other issues, however, not immediately linked to apostolic practice, he is very liberal and extraordinarily modern in his outlook.

4. The word used is 'wājib', referring to the second of the five classes of lawful acts. It refers to what is obligatory, but of which there is some doubt whether or not it was enjoined in the Quran or in a tradition of unquestionable authenticity.

Fourth Assembly

Qazi Shah, the son of Qazi Ashrafuddin's brother, an expounder of the Law, was present. He said that a dervish had told him that he had recited the Quran completely seventy times while circumambulating the Ka'ba. He was asked: "With what words and meaning?" He replied: "With words, meaning and letters." Afterwards he enquired how it could be possible "in letters", for this did not stand to reason.

The Venerable Master replied: "It so happens that this group, as they follow their own path, attain a particular stage wherein human qualities leave them completely and they are endowed with an angelic disposition. When this happens, they are enabled to tackle each task with angelic power. So it is that the seventy recitals of the Quran by that dervish took place. At all events, it is well known that a work which would take a man a day to do can be done by an angel in the twinkling of an eye. He added that it is said that there was a cell. A sage entered it through a closed door. This also took place through this angelic power. For example, when an angel comes to a door, it does not have to make use of it. The same thing applies to such a person. It is also related of some that they entered fire but were not at all burnt. They too possessed angelic power, for angels are also unscathed by fire. At this stage it is said: 'This man has passed beyond the world of humanity.'"

One of those present said: "Do they call the world of humanity the world of human nature?"[1]

He replied, "Yes."

Afterwards he said: "The sages have composed volumes in which they have decribed these powers." He related a story in this connection. "Khwaja Ahmad Surkh used to tell this story. 'There is a mosque in Baghdad. I arrived there. I heard that Khwaja Ahmad Ghazzali had performed a forty-day retreat

there. During that retreat forty dates were brought to him daily. He used to break his fast with them each day. He also took forty quires[2] of blank paper, an ink-pot and a pen, and entered a cell and was busily engaged in writing. When the forty days were over, the forty blank quires of paper had been filled with writing. He brought them outside. Afterwards he had them transcribed.' It is not within the power of man to fill forty quires with writing in forty days. This too could not have occurred except through that power."

A little later, in praise of Khwaja Ahmad Ghazzali, he related the following story: "He was in Wasit for some time and, in fact, he lies buried there. On one occasion the Caliph sent him this royal command: 'The people of Baghdad are in need of your learning. A suitable madrasa and hospice have been provided. If it is possible, come to Baghdad, display your learning so that the people may benefit from your scholarship.' Khwaja Ahmad replied in his own words in a befitting manner. He wrote: 'When I reached Jerusalem, I made these three vows: firstly, I would not accept anything from kings; secondly, I would not fight with anyone; and thirdly, I would not go to the doors of kings. If I were to come there, I would not have any goods or property to provide for myself. I would be forced, out of necessity, to accept things from you. In this fashion, I would break my vows. In addition to this, when I would come and take my seat in the college, I would be obliged to teach, and my teaching, nowadays, has changed its colour. The theologians of Baghdad would not stand for it. They would fall to and dispute it. Thus I would necessarily be drawn into conflict with them and break yet another of my vows. And if I were there, I would have to go to your door and thus this vow of mine would also be broken. Imagine that Ghazzali has arrived in Baghdad and taught in the college and died. It would be necessary to search for another lecturer. Do that right now."

I am but a fraud, a drunkard and a tavern-goer;

Ask nothing more of what has happened—it is past.

Seek nothing intelligent from me, a madman,

Nor lawful deeds from one of tainted faith.

After a while, he said: "Nowadays very few such sages

remain in that land. So many travellers arrive, and people are eager to hear from them something about such great men. They have nothing to say. A group of distracted ones had arrived here once. Their leader was saying: 'These three sages are left. One, Alauddin; the second Sheikh Sharafuddin, the eldest brother of Malik-Fariduddin,[3] and the third, another dervish.[4] All three great men have died.' " He recited the following couplet:

> The company of good men has departed from the world:
> The beehive has turned into a hornet's nest.

He added: "This Alauddin was the prime minister of the king. He had resigned his post and became engrossed in God's work. At length, he was granted revelations and attained sainthood."

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. The Persian terms are *nāsūt* and *bashariyat* respectively.
2. A quire of paper means two dozen sheets.
3. Thus MSS 2462 (B), 2940 & 2941 (C) in the Khuda Bakhsh Oriental Public Library, as well as the printed text, from Firdausi Khanqah, Bihar Sharif, dated 1903 (D). On the other hand, MS 2592 (A), has "Fariduddin, the eldest brother of Malik..." but no name is supplied. In fact, the scribe has changed 'Sharafuddin' into 'Fariduddin'.
4. 'A' has 'buzurgi', while BCD, as also a MS from the Bodleian Library (no. 1263 in the catalogue of E. Sachau & H. Ethe) called *Ma'dan ul-Ma'ānī*, which is really a copy of *Khwān-i Pur Ni'mat*, (*E*), have 'darweshi'.

Fifth Assembly

Qazi Ashrafuddin said: "Many travellers halt at mosques. Have you seen any tradition in this connection?"

The Venerable Master replied: "I have not noticed anything. It is astonishing that permission has been granted in this matter. It is disputed as to when eating in a mosque is lawful. Some hold that it is lawful on the supposition that a person intends to remain secluded in the mosque. It has been said concerning such a person: 'Let him eat !' Otherwise, there would be no eating."

The Helpless One said, "If somebody takes an oath without using the name of God but by calling upon something else as, for example, his mother, father, spiritual guide or teacher, would it be lawful or not?"

He replied: "It would not be.[1] It is written in *Kanz ul-Masā'il* (A Store of Sayings): 'If people had not been habituated to this, I would have written that anybody who swears by anything other than God's name commits infidelity.' " He added: "There is a tradition from the Apostle which says: 'Whoever takes an oath in any name other than that of God, inevitably commits infidelity.' "

NOTE AND REFERENCE

1. ABD have 'nabāshad' while C adds 'hargiz'.

Sixth Assembly

Maulana Karimuddin said: "If a person spreads his prayer-mat on the place for prayer then, in *Targhīb uṣ-Ṣalāt* (An Inducement to Prayer) it is written that it is disapproved of. What is the reason for this?" [1]

The Venerable Master replied: "Yes, this is found in *Targhīb uṣ-Ṣalāt*. Seeing that it is there, what might the reason be? On the other hand, it is related in *Jawāhir* (Jewels)—and repeated in the *Hidāya* (Guidance)— that a man from Kufa once came to the Great Imam (i.e. Abu Hanifa). He had spread his prayer-mat on the place for prayer and was offering his prayers on it. The man said: 'Do people offer their prayers on prayer-mats in your city?' The Great Imam replied: 'What do people pray on in your city?' He said: 'On a reed mat.' The Great Imam explained: 'That is also a prayer-mat. What difference does it make if it is called a reed mat?' Afterwards, concerning the same point, he added: 'Praise came from behind me.' Namely, 'I am the leader of the Muslims.' The leader first says 'God is Great,' not someone who is imitating him. In the same way, I am esteemed for my opinion.' "

Maulana Karimuddin again asked: "Some people come barefooted to the mosque and pray. What do you think about that?"

He said: "It would be allowable. Dirty feet do not indicate impurity. All one can say is that there is a possibility of impurity. At root, purity lies in things, for some of the companions of the Prophet[2] used to come barefooted to the mosque and offer prayers there."

Again he asked: "What if it is muddy?"

He replied: "The same would apply—there would be a possibility of impurity. In itself, there is no impurity involved." Later he added: "Bukhara has a large population. The excre-

ment of four-footed animals and so on collects in a considerable quantity on the roads there and gets mixed up with the dust. When this news reached the Venerable Imam Muhammad,[3] he issued a judgement stating that the dust of Bukhara was impure. Afterwards, when he arrived in Bukhara and saw for himself the large number of people and noticed how busily they were occupied with their affairs, and considered what a trial and hardship it would be for them if the dust of their city were declared to be impure, he retracted his decision. He said: 'The dust of Bukhara is pure.' "

Afterwards he said: "In the time of the devoted Maulana Alauddin, I was there.[4] The question arose about the wells inside the fort as to whether they were pure or impure. Inside the fort the wells are such that there is no proper surroundings. The slave-girls go along with soiled hands and feet. They draw water. They do not take care to avoid impure things. Many people began to wonder whether the water was pure or not. Afterwards they said: 'An authoritative decision should be given in this matter. Whatever the expounders of the Law decide upon should be accepted.' Thereupon the expounders of the Law gathered. They said: 'The people inside the fort are used to this. They generally use this water to wash their hands and faces, for cooking their food and drinking. If we write that these wells are impure, the people will be greatly put out and consequently suffer much.' Thereupon they wrote: 'The water is pure.' "

It also happened that the scholars of Sonargaon once created a disturbance by contending that it was forbidden to eat lime because the shell is produced from elements produced by a shell-fish.[5] A tumult arose in Sonargaon. News reached the nobles and rulers[6] that the scholars were saying that it was forbidden to take lime. They also grew anxious: 'Should we take it or not?' They assembled the expounders of the Law. They in turn said: 'So many thousands of people are accustomed to taking lime. Since this is so, if we write a prohibition against it, our order will mean that many thousands of Muslims are taking what is forbidden.' After that, nobody wrote a legal decision condemning it."

Afterwards Maulana Karimuddin asked: "What is the legal

basis for their not having given a decision condemning the practice?" He replied: "To make things easy for the people, because the path of Islam is a wide one. Whatever brings hardship upon the people is not permitted to be imposed on them. Those things which have been prohibited by the text of the Book[7] itself, even though the people have accepted and become habituated to them, are not to be allowed simply to make things easy for the people. For example, the drinking of wine is prohibited on the authority of the Book, yet thousands of people are used to imbibing wine. Don't say, in this instance, that the people are accustomed to it! As long as something remains a disputed point, however, and the people are accustomed to it, they should not be troubled in that matter, but things should be made easy for them. An order in that vein should be issued. All effort to this end is admissible. Authoritative decisions should be given in such a way as to make things easy for the people and that no harm should befall them. This injunction can be proved from the Quran: 'God Almighty said: 'No constriction in religion remained for you.' "

Once again Maulana Karimuddin said: "Once Maulana Ziauddin Sunami[8] was asked: 'What do you say about plaiting one's hair with silk ribbons?' Maulana Ziauddin replied: 'O brother, so many people have become accustomed to it.' At this point, he stopped short."

After this, the Venerable Master said: "The fact is that, since he saw that the people were accustomed to this, he did not speak against it."

Sheikh Mu'izzuddin then said: "If it is said that it is forbidden to wear silk, and this is established by a tradition, 'Both of these things are forbidden for members of my community,' then what answer can be made to this?" He replied: "Wearing is forbidden, but this knot is something upon which to entwine one's hair and then knot it. This is not called 'wearing' but 'knotting'. I remember this very point in connection with Maulana Sharafuddin Tau'ama."

Again he said: " 'A legal decision changes in accordance with the times.' Is this absolute?" He replied: "Yes, if a decision has been given on some point in the first period of Islam and is

strictly applicable to the people of the second and third periods. Then a dispute arises and the decisions of the second and third period change. Here the saying, 'A legal decision changes in accordance with the times' is applicable."

He went on: "In the town of Bihar a man was saying: 'I have given a written decision declaring silk ribbons to be forbidden.' " The Venerable Master said: "His behaviour was childish. What credence can be given to the words of such people? To begin with, it has to be ascertained whether such people have understood the tradition at all! The words which can be accepted are those spoken by a religious man, a leader or a trustworthy person.[9] You can accept immediately what you hear them say, but who can believe one and all? For example, such people who have read the *Hidāya*[10] and *Pazhdavi* and become jurisconsults[11] and begun to write authoritative decisions on the Law. If a difficulty concerning the articles of faith or mystical knowledge is asked, they are nonplussed. Who can put any credence in the words of such people? Where is their intelligence, and where is their religion? Maulana Sharafuddin Tau'ama[12] was such a learned man that his fame had spread throughout Hindustan. There was nobody who entertained any doubt about his learning. He made use of silk ribbons, and also used a silk pyjama-cord. He did not write such things. Is it fitting for anybody else after him to do so? During the time he was teaching, whenever a difficulty arose, he would ponder over it. While he was doing so, he would take hold of his silk ribbon and play with it and remain engrossed in this fashion until he solved his difficulty. He would then let go the ribbon and explain the difficulty."

Later on he added: "Those who are well grounded in the faith, and have become conversant with the meaning of God's Book and the Traditions of the Apostle, can give authoritative decisions, for they know that this tradition originates from a certain context and can be applied in a particular situation. Nowadays if you ask jurisconsults about a particular tradition they won't know what to say. The two-fold foundation is none other than Quranic exegesis and the Traditions so that, once a person has them at his finger-tips, he is in a position to speak

authoritatively drawing, as he does, both from the Quran and the Traditions."[13]

Afterwards he continued: "The science of Tradition is a difficult one, comprising all the parts of the Book.[14] Until a person is conversant with them all, he cannot give the meaning of a single tradition. Yet a person who masters the meanings of the Book can do so. If a tradition comes before him, he will compare it with the Book. If he finds it in consonance with the Book, he will accept it. If he finds it in conflict with it, he will reject it. So, then, if somebody does not know the meanings of the Book, what can he compare it with?" [15]

Maulana Karimuddin asked: "What is meant by 'Tradition' ?" He said: "Revelation[16] is either manifest or hidden. Manifest revelation is that which occurred through Gabriel as an intermediary. That is the Quran, for the entire Revered Quran came to the Apostle through Gabriel.[17] On the other hand, hidden revelation is that which descended upon the Apostle without any intermediary and was related by him. This type is called 'Tradition'."

When Your eye flashes a secret to mine,
There is no need for Gabriel at such a time.

Again he asked: "Is what comes other than through Gabriel 'inspiration'?"[18] He said: " 'Inspiration' refers to the saints. Concerning the Apostle, it is called 'hidden revelation'. It has the very same meaning as what we call 'hidden revelation' with respect to the Apostle. With regard to saints, it is 'inspiration'."

Again he said: "It is not admissible that there should be any fault or error in the hidden revelation which used to come to the Apostle. Concerning the inspiration which comes to the saints, however, is there a possibility of fault or error?" He said: "In their inspiration also there is no scope for fault or error,[19] for there is a light within them. 'He obtained light from his Lord' contains a hint in the matter. By means of that light they know that this is from God. They accept whatever they find comes from God. They will not accept, however, anything which is not from God."

Alauddin, a near relative of Amir Shadi, the Deputy Chamberlain,[20] said: "Do people who hang tiny Qurans around their necks have them hanging on their right side or on their left?" He replied: "On the right side is better so that there should be a difference between the Quran and other things that people are accustomed to wear or carry. When they hang a shoulder-bag or something else across their shoulders, they let it hang on the left side. Similarly if someone offers them a Quran they take hold of it with both hands so that there may be a distinction between the way they receive the Quran and other things, for it is customary for people to take hold of anything given them by another with one hand."

Sheikh Mu'izzuddin said: "What about books on jurisprudence?" He replied: "What applies to the Quran applies to them as well. Both are the same as far as honouring them is concerned. Hence, such books are to be respected."

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. Usually there is some form of permanent covering on the enclosed portions of Indian mosques. Prayers are offered on whatever covering is thus provided. Bringing one's own prayer-mat is not needed, or encouraged, in such circumstances. Where there is no covering from the elements, it would be reasonable to bring something.
2. The reference is to the companions of Muhammad.
3. He and Abu Yusuf were the chief two disciples and successors of Imam Hanifa (d. 767 A.D), the founder of the Hanafite school of jurisprudence, the one most commonly followed in India.
4. The Persian has 'injā', meaning 'here', but the context makes it clear that he was 'there'. The reference could be to the fortress-town of Tughluqabad, built by Ghiyasuddin Tughluq (d. 1325 A.D.), the founder of the Tughluq dynasty.
5. The lime was produced by burning the shells. It was taken with betel leaves.
6. The Persian has 'mulūk' which means 'kings' or 'rulers', and could refer to Shamsuddin Firuz Shah and his son, Qutlugh Khan. The subsequently mentioned anxiety was in keeping with the known refined religious sensibilities of the prince.
7. The 'Book' is the Quran. Anything deriving its authority from the Quran is 'farẓ'—strictly to be observed. It is the highest of the five classifications of actions in Islamic Law.

8. The question indicates that Maulana Karimuddin had spent some time in Delhi, for Sharafuddin himself tells us that he had heard Sunami: "Maulana Ziauddin Sunami was both a renowned traditionist and Quranic commentator. One day, I was present in his congregation." (*Ma'dan ul-Ma'ānī*, ch. 12)

9. Many modern Muslims would agree on the need for moral integrity on the part of those giving authoritative decisions. The present writer has heard this opinion expressed.

10. The *Hidāya*, by Sheikh Burhanuddin Ali (d. 1197 A.D.) is a very widely known work of jurisprudence. The *Pazhdavi* is a lesser-known work of the same genre.

11. Sharafuddin has high expectations with regard to the requirements of jurisconsults. Here, of course, he is being sarcastic.

12. The reader is reminded of the fact that Maulana Tau'ama was Sharafuddin's own teacher. He had accompanied him, as a young teenager, from Maner to Sonargaon, about 1304 A.D. He remained there until about 1323 A.D.

13. Sharafuddin's principle of interpretation are thoroughly orthodox yet balanced, in a most laudable manner, with a deep sense of compassion for the ordinary man and woman. There is absolutely no question of his compromising on anything strictly enjoined—farẓ—but he is very open in all other areas. It reflects his mind-set: absolute devotion to God combined with a deep compassion for 'the creatures of God', for he gradually perceived his greatest service as that of 'bringing comfort to hearts'.

14. The Quran.

15. Sharafuddin's insistence on a thorough mastery of the Quran and on its primacy as the ultimate criterion for determining the meaning of any given tradition are distinctive of his position as a jurisconsult. (cf. also note 13).

16. The word for revelation is 'waḥy', which is either 'jalī' (manifest) or 'khafī' (hidden).

17. This is a clear statement of the traditional Islamic concept of revelation.

18. 'Ilhām'.

19. Sharafuddin is sharing with us the sense of certainty he felt in his experience of God, a certainty which left no room for doubt in his own mind. Experienced spiritual guides, however, while agreeing with his basic contention, point out that people can get their own immediately subsequent reflections mixed up with what was clearly an intimate experience of God. If this happens, error is possible.

20. 'Nā' ib-i 'Arẓ', in the Persian. The official must have belonged to the court of the reigning Sultan, Muhammad bin Tughluq.

Seventh Assembly

The Helpless One said: "If the Messenger[1] was asked about a particular point and an apt answer occurred to him but no revelation descended, in such a situation would he give out that apt answer or not?" The Venerable Master replied: "First of all, he would wait for a revelation. If a revelation descended, he would speak that out. On the other hand, if the period during which revelation customarily occurred, passed by, then it was time to turn to working it out and, by means of reflection he would do so and give out what seemed best to him. It would be precious."

The Helpless One asked: "How was the period of revelation estimated?" He replied: "He used to know because he had grown accustomed to it. Thus, if there was any delay, he would know that period of revelation had passed by."

The Helpless One again said: "Some saintly people have said in regard to a certain person: 'May God grant you a certain pain!' What pain did they have in mind?" He replied: "The pain of seeking God, the pain of religion,[2] and the pain of God's work."

Be a man of pain, O brother, a man of pain!

Afterwards he added: "The work of religion proceeds from somebody who has been gripped by the pain of religion so that he does what he[3] has commanded and abstains from what he has not commanded. If there is somebody who is not afflicted by that pain then, as far as he is concerned, what is lawful and what is forbidden are one and the same. He does whatever he feels like doing. He does not distinguish[4] what is lawful from what is not."

Again the Helpless One asked: "How is this pain acquired?" He replied: "It is from the Hidden World. Whosoever receives it stands in need of nothing more, as is the case with so

many other pains. There is, however, a preparation for this by means of which a person becomes prepared for, and capable of, that pain. There is an inner purification for this so that a person is made ready." Afterwards he added: "If an inclination towards this work arises within somebody then, in the beginning, he experiences something of this.[5] At that time he considers himself a lover and friend of God and lays claim to love and friendship until such time as he is brought low,[6] as in the following couplet:

I'm intoxicated with the wine of Love: I can't be prudent!
I can't be free from revelry or drunkenness.

As soon as that pain seizes somebody, however, sleep and rest abandon him. He has neither rest by night nor tranquillity by day—and this pain knows no remedy. 'Alas, what an affliction! What has happened? What has befallen me?' It is this very state which is called 'love'. This is the time and place for crying and lamenting. Helplessg roaning seizes one: 'O that this pain might leave me completely and be thrust away from me so that I might find release from this!' This is the state of someone enmeshed by love.[7] Every couplet devoted to complaining about love or the pain of love, lamenting, weeping and crying out that people in love experience is applicable to this state, as has been said:"

O Love, what have you done to me?
O Pain, what face have you shown to me?

Afterwards, the Helpless One said: "While one is thus enmeshed, experiencing lamentation, crying out, seeking release and showing signs of fleeing, why is there no command given to turn back?[8] He replied: "Well, no command to return is issued because it would make the person perplexed. All of this continues until such time as he becomes used to it. Afterwards he grows accustomed to it and remains tranquil in spite af it,[9] and says:

Pain from You is balm indeed:
Poison from You, antidote beyond peer."

On this very occasion Haji Abu Sa'id arrived. He was honoured by seeing the Master. The Venerable Master, how-

ever, was feeling a little unwell. He enquired about how he felt. Afterwards he said: "The mother of the son of this slave[10] is greatly troubled. She has a small daughter and son. Today, my mother was crying. I asked her why she was crying. She replied: 'She has small children and she is very sick herself.' Afterwards I said: 'God Almighty is bountiful and merciful. He is the Sustainer of all."

After this the Venerable Master said: "Her attention was fixed on her sympathy for the young ones. The heart of the matter is that, when a particular decree reaches her, then this cause arises. She experiences a certain difficulty. This is why she begins to cry. If somebody's attention, however, is not fixed on this cause he will understand that God Most High is all powerful and that this is not without a cause, but it is in the Hidden, whether it come to pass or not.[11] To bind one's heart to the Hidden is a very difficult undertaking, a great work indeed! Much preparation and strength is needed for it. It is found in the prophets and saints whose gaze has gone beyond external causes and come to rest in the divine decree.[12]

They have come to depend on the Hidden.[13]

As far as they are concerned, whether a thing exists or not is one and the same for them. If it exists, well and good. If it does not, it makes no difference. Their tranquillity does not depend on the existence of anything, nor is there any anguish if anything ceases to exist."

Intelligent people steer clear of calamity:
The religion of lovers is not like this!

The Helpless One observed: "If someone has entrusted himself to God, he should not experience any anxiety thereafter, otherwise his trust would be defective." He replied: "Perfect trust means that there should be no more anxiety for one who depends on God, but if a person's actual dependence is not perfect, or if he experiences fear of calamity or contention then, even though he be essentially good,[14] he will undoubtedly feel anxious, but his soul remains trustful. For example, consider a man who is thirsty but has no water to drink. He puts his trust in God believing that He has the power to provide water. In the meantime, an extended period passes by and his thirst

increases, yet there is no water around. Undoubtedly he is human and is anxious about bearing up. He grows agitated. If he is strong, however, and has entrusted himself to God, he knows that, if water has not arrived by this time, after some more time it will. And so it happens. For some it takes only a while, for others quite some time, but water will surely be found."

The Helpless One enquired: "It might also happen that water is not found." He replied: "It is also possible that water is not found and the person consequently perishes. This means that it had been thus predestined for him: 'We will not give him water.' For this reason he dies. Moreover, he should realize that, if he does not find water, this failure to do so is not the cause of the ending of his life. He should realize this fact: 'Nothing further has been allotted to me. This much was apportioned to me. I can expect no more.' He should pay great attention to his faith at this stage, for this is when Satan steps forwards and taunts him thus: 'You have put your trust in God, and everyone who does that is the object of this command: 'He will not be disturbed,' but here your trust has been shaken. The same thing applies to those other things you have put your faith in.' (May God protect me from it!) What about this faith in other things? It might turn aside from other things. It is imperative that he look carefully to himself in such circumstances. These things cannot be obtained without the divine favour."[15]

The Helpless One said: "This 'existence and non-existence become one' and 'fastening the heart to the Hidden becomes possible' arise out of what insight?" He replied: "They arise from mystical knowledge,[16] when this knowledge has led to the conviction that God Most High is all powerful, that He can create 18,000 worlds, and another 10,000,000 without any secondary causes. If there are any such causes, well and good. If not, no matter! When this mystical knowledge attains to deep certainty a person becomes a man of indubitable conviction. In the strength of this infused conviction—not an intellectual knowledge,[17] for the condition of the perfection of faith means that, for them, what is present and Hidden become one—that which is concealed from others lies open to them,

on account of their conviction." Afterwards he recited this couplet:

They scoffed at me: What did you see within?
How can the blind know what men of vision see!

He said: "There is the matter of 'being praised or blamed by the people' becoming one. Being eulogized by the people is 'praise', while 'blame' means being rejected by them. Both come to be the same for them to this extent that the praise of people ceases to cause them joy, while rejection by them does not make them sad or unhappy. The reason for this is that they have been granted an inner conviction so that if everybody, with complete sincerity, calls a particular person an Abu Yazid, an Imam Junaid, an ascetic, a true worshipper, or a chaste one, but the person has no standing as far as God is concerned, then what profit is there if people call him an Abu Yazid, Imam Junaid, ascetic, true worshipper or chaste one? The same applies to blame. If everybody calls a particular person an infidel, speaks against his good name, but he has standing with God, then what loss does he suffer on account of their calling him an infidel and saying he is not a Muslim? Hence it is that, for them, it is one and the same if people find fault with them or praise them." [18]

There is no snaring the seer with a good name:
How can the elect be afraid of common chatter?

And again:

One swept off his feet by a beautiful face
Knows aught of praise or blame.

"There is a stage beyond this, and that is one of great dignity. It is indeed rare for anybody to reach that stage. It occurs when praise or blame from people have become one and the same for them. Yet there is a stage beyond this, namely, when someone finds happiness in the reproaches of men, but is upset by praise. He finds love in his heart for anyone who speaks ill of him. If anyone praises him, however, he finds enmity towards him in his heart. This happens when someone has become aware of the faults of his own soul and, on account of

the purity of perception which is within him, he sees every defect of his soul, and he sees not a single pleasing action within himself. His soul appears to him like an enemy. Anybody who praises him seems, to his soul, to be his enemy. You would say he was reproaching him. Now it is well known that when anyone abuses a person's enemy, love for him appears in the person's heart; and when someone lauds him, he is praising his enemy. If anyone praises a person's enemy, enmity towards him appears in the person's heart. All this arises from this insight and is a very rare occurrence."[19]

A discussion about God's power and benevolence arose. The Venerable Master said: "When a believer's attention is fixed on God's benevolence, he experiences consolation and peace, but when it is fixed on His power and utter self-sufficiency, knowledge and intellect take to flight and amazement overwhelms him."

Your intoxicated eyes caused my blood to flow:
Oh, if your lips were not my protector!

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. The Messenger (paighāmbar) is Muhammad.
2. 'Dīn' can be translated either as 'religion' (i.e. Islam) or 'the faith', meaning the Islamic faith. In this sense it is analagous to the 'Fidei Defensor' found on English coins.
3. Muhammad is being referred to.
4. Strictly speaking, "he will not know what is forbidden and what is lawful." Yet, from the context, it is not so much a question of knowledge but of bothering about whether something is lawful or not.
5. Some form of spiritual consolation, common among beginners in the spiritual life, is being referred to. Spiritual writers affirm that God is very generous with sensible consolations at this stage in order to encourage those He has called to tread the Way to Him.
6. Borne along on the wings of consolation, the novice thinks he is far more advanced than he actually is. Something happens which makes him realize that his claims are somewhat presumptuous.
7. The text refers to being enmeshed by all the pain and affliction which, in our human experience, inevitably follows a commitment of love.
8. He is asking why God does not allow them to return to the starting point where they would not experience these trials. This has as much

sense as advising a grown man, caught up in the trials of life, to revert to his childhood.

9. Only those who have advanced along the Way know what Sharafuddin is talking about. At root, genuine love of God has entered his life and a mortal struggle has ensued between this greatest of all loves, which is actually constitutive of a person's being, and the multilayered forms of human selfishness. Human pride fights to the bitter end, and it is this struggle which causes all the pain.

10. He is the 'slave' and the lady is his wife.

11. 'B' is followed. The argument is that the real cause lies in God, not in the one before our eyes.

12. A & C have 'mashiyat', while B has 'masiyat'. The former, meaning God's will or decree, is obviously correct. In general, the reader is infomed that a process of selection from the four MSS and one printed edition of *Khwān* went on continuously during the work of translation. All had errors, and none was vastly superior to the others. Most discrepancies, such as the present one, are easily handled, and the reader is spared such minor details, except where any doubt remains, or where there is some real significance attached to a variati on.

13. It is easy enough to speak of such dependence, but for a human being to reach this stage is neither common nor easy. It presupposes generous cooperation over a considerable period to the divine initiatives.

14. Although 'kāmil' is usually translated as 'perfect' there is a great danger, in our technological age, of mechanistic overtones in this word. Hence the choice of 'essentially good', which indicates the sort of person being described, one who is able to rise above, but not be unaffected by, the joys and sorrows of life.

15. Sharafuddin is logical in his argument, stressing the primacy of the divine decree. Secondary causes (e.g. finding water or not) are under the sway of God's design for him. For Sharafuddin, such an attitude does not lead to blind fatalism but to a profound, child-like trust in God, the fruit of which is a deep, inner tranquillity.

16. Spiritual writers would agree that this is a God-given insight, but one which presupposes a faithful and generous response to lesser, preceding graces.

17. This remark is of significance, if the translator has grasped the meaning of the whole passage. 'Mystical knowledge' and 'conviction' are both translations of 'ma'rifat', for the passage speaks about a progression. This indicates a form of 'knowledge' which transforms a person, and is opposed to what one might call 'bookish knowledge' or 'intellectual knowledge'. (cf. His third degree of faith, letter one, *The Hundred Letters*).

18. Sharafuddin is undoubtedly sharing his inner experience with us here. In a faith community such as that of the Muslims in Medieval India, there was no headier wine than the spiritual adulation of the masses, as Sharafuddin knew from experience. On several occasions he warns his disciples that this is the precise moment when Satan is ready to entrap him in the net of spiritual pride, of attributing his sanctity primarily to himself, rather than to God's gracious love.

19. Although expressed in a different manner, this would correspond to Sharafuddin's fourth degree of faith (cf. no. 17). There the emphasis is on the actual experience of such faith—the grace itself—while here he is more describing the fruits of such a grace. This is a more reliable touchstone to its authenticity.

Eighth Assembly

The Helpless One said: "In several places it is written that 'wealth does not bypass a capable person, and that it does not reach anyone who is not prepared.' Is this caused by the divine manner of proceeding, and is it not a display of divine power?"[1] The Venerable Master replied: "Yes."

Again the Helpless One asked: "To what extent is preparation necessary?" He answered: "Accepting what is commanded and rejecting what is forbidden is bound up with what is external." He added: "It is also connected with what is internal, just as, for masters of the Path, the very command concerning externals is applied by them to some internal aspect of the Path, as in this verse, by way of example 'Wash your faces and your hands' (Q 5 : 6). This is a command to wash one's face and hands, and this is its external meaning. At this level, both ordinary people and the elect are in agreement, but the Sheikhs say that, although this is the external meaning, there is an inner meaning of 'washing', namely washing their faces from looking at anyone who is unlawful for them,[2] and their hands from catching hold of what is forbidden, and their feet from treading forbidden paths. This special interpretation applies to the elect, for it is they who have to implement it, as well as their followers. It is obligatory for the elect to do this in accordance with their particular stage. The same applies to their followers as an obligation flowing from their discipleship. This is called 'an obligation of state,'[3] not one imposed by the Law. In their stage inner purity is necessary, just as external cleanliness is obligatory for formal prayer."

Afterwards he said: "Again, any person from whom any work issues forth has to possess the ability to do that work. By virtue of that ability the work is performed. If he is not capable, the work is utterly impossible."

Qazi Nasrullah said: "Who are called 'capable'?" He

replied: "Any person who can discern which of several possible meanings is the correct one is called 'capable'. For example, among a number of students there is one gifted with natural intelligence. If someone explains something to him he picks it up. Given a mere hint, he understands the point. Such a youngster is called 'capable'. He takes in what he hears. If somebody does not have that gift, however, event hough he studies and things are explained to him a thousand times he grasps nothing. From his reaction you would say that he had not even heard what was said!

It is also like two palaces. In one, an image is engraved and it stands out clearly, while the other palace is dark or flat. If an image is engraved on it, it will not stand out at all and no one will see it. The same is true for a painter. If he wishes to paint something on a sheet of paper, first of all he applies a particular colour to the paper which will make the painting stand out. Only then, over the colour, does he execute his painting, which stands out. What has happened? Firstly, he has prepared the paper for the painting. Having done that, the painting stands out, for the paper is fit to be painted on. The same is true for a signet ring used for official seals. If it is pressed onto clay or wax it produces a seal, but not if it is pressed against a stone. This is how it is with all things."

Afterwards he asked: "What is the reason for the lack of ability?" He replied: "It is due to some defect from the moment of creation itself. If not, it could be that, after coming into existence, the person acquired some defects which do not admit of explanations. Where reasons for the defects are traced he should acquire their opposites so that those defects might disappear and capacity replace them. The relationship between a spiritual guide and his disciple illustrates this. By means of the power of his sanctity, the guide assists his disciple to acquire very many things, bearing him from an inability due to a defect to capability. Where there is capacity, the blessing and insight from the guide is capable of being assimilated."

The Venerable Master was sitting on the portico in front of his cell. There was a courtyard in front. He utilized the setting to illustrate his meaning. He said: "The reason why the rays of the sun reach this wall and courtyard is the absence of any

hindrance between them and the sun's rays, but these rays do not reach this cell which is so well enclosed simply because so many walls and a roof have been constructed to enclose it. These are all obstacles which have been placed between the cell and the sun's rays. If all these were dismantled and removed far from the cell, then it would become just like this wall and courtyard in front. The sun's rays would reach inside it too. Because the wall and courtyard did not have these defects they were capable of receiving the rays of the sun, but the cell, on account of these defects, could not, and therefore did not, do so. Consider the worth of a mural and that of a man who speaks to it of love—fruitlessly, of course."

Afterwards he said: "In this connection also, whatever appears in this visible world from the Hidden one does so to the extent that there is a capacity for it." He said: "In Bengal, scholars of jurisprudence are so adept as to be able to split hairs, but if you ask them something about grammar and syntax, asking 'Why is this noun in the nominative case?' or 'Why is this consonant marked with a 'fatha' ?'[4] they will not say anything, for they won't know. Thus it is that they are quite capable of handling questions about jurisprudence but not about grammar and syntax. Moreover, if knowledge is not for the sake of God, then what about grammar or jurisprudence, and what about this thing or that? Each and every one has been granted a special capacity and, according to that, matters proceed. If someone has a sharp mind he will understand whatever he hears and will be able to study and grasp all the sciences. Now it is said that he is capable of grasping all sorts of meanings. Such a person is a rarity."

The Helpless One asked: "To what extent can humility and submission be present in prayer?" He replied: "The meaning of 'humility' and 'submission' is the same, but their limit is that each external bodily member has limits imposed by the Law, while internally one is brought to realize that 'God is all-seeing and all-informed about my states, my actions and my external and internal affairs.' By way of illustration it is said that a person on his prayer-carpet is informed that, while standing, he should fix his gaze on the place he will prostrate his head and, while prostrating, on his nose and, while sitting, on his lap. Something similar applies to each member."

The Helpless One again asked: "Are humility and submission works proceeding from the heart?" He replied: "Yes, they are works of the heart. After the heart has been brought to bear it will have an effect on the limbs. The actions of the limbs come under the sway of the states of a person's heart. If one's heart is in a laudable state, the actions of one's limbs will be so too. If one's heart is in a despicable state, so too will be the actions of one's limbs. Thus it is that, in the Path, making one's heart correct is that firm foundation without which the disciple is incapable of doing anything correctly."

The Helpless One said: "When humility and submission appear in one's heart, does intimate converse arise?" He replied: "Assuredly! Intimate converse means communicating something held secret. Firstly presence is needed; then telling the secret-just as can be observed when there is a secret between one person and another. When both are present, but the heart of one is somewhere else, how can a secret be communicated? With whom will the person talk?"

Again the Helpless One enquired: "Can intimate converse be of several kinds? Is one type when, for some time, a person's tongue moves in reciting his beads, magnifying God and praising His Holiness while, at other times, he presents his own mean, confounded, unworthy and helpless condition?" He replied: "Both forms are possible."

Again he asked: "Could those saintly persons who fall into forgetfulness during ritual prayer be caught up in such states?" He replied: "Yes, forgetfulness does occur on such occasions. When a person's heart becomes engrossed in such things it cannot pay attention to counting the component parts and actions of ritual prayer. Moreover, 'What have I done' and 'How far have I reached?' become unanswerable questions. Most saintly people who cannot lead public prayer are unable to do so because their ritual prayer is like this: the very moment they begin their prayer, they are filled with humility and submission, intimate converse and the sense of being in God's presence. Their hearts forget about actions and parts to be counted, so how can they count?" [5] He recited this verse:

The needy one, in the alley of the tavern,

Tastes full awareness and intoxication in prayer itself.

He said: "It is related that all the sages were prayer-leaders in their early and middle stages but, when they were beyond instability and had reached maturity, then forgetfulness occurred less frequently.[6] If someone says, at this juncture, that the Apostle was firmly established spiritually, so how could forgetfulness overcome him, then the answer would be that he had to expound the Law. I spoke in a restricted sense, saying that a person becomes less forgetful. I did not say that it did not occur at all."

Again he asked: "Does it happen to some that, from beginning to end, their prayer is full of intimate converse, humility and submission?" He replied, "Yes."

Again he asked: "Does it also happen that some people, on some occasions, are overcome by humility and submission at some point of their prayer? When this happens, do they prolong that part?" He answered, "Yes, this also happens, and a person then prolongs his prayer. How can he realize time is passing? It might happen that he does not find this happening in his next cycle of prayer. An overflowing abundance comes all at once. What does it matter if he offers the other parts in a dry fashion? From the point of view of meaning, that is not formal prayer but, because all the necessary conditions are present, the Law acknowledges that it is lawful prayer."[7]

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. The point at issue is the respective natures of God's role and that of man while travelling the Sufi Path to God.

2. The reference is to women who are 'unlawful' for the person, according to Islamic Law.

3. In other words, one's particular spiritual state produces or generates its own demands—'obligations' which probably would not even occur to ordinary folk.

4. A 'fatha' is a diacritical mark indicating the short vowel, 'a'.

5. The description is an expression of what Sharafuddin himself had undoubtedly experienced. Husain Mu'izz Balkhi, for example, mentions how he would easily fall into an ecstasy during musical sessions (cf. *Ganj-i lā Yakhfā*, ch. 40).

6. There are two points here: one is the exercise of the function of prayer-leader, and the other is that of a gradual lessening of ecstatic raptures as a person 'matures' in the spiritual life. This is a commonly observed form of progression. Husain goes on to mention (loc. cit., no. 4) that Sharafuddin's personal interest in participating in musical sessions waned in later years, for his level of union with God had grown deeper than that experienced during such sessions.

7. The point is to assert the lawfulness of the portions of ritual prayer during which a person has been swept up momentarily into God.

Ninth Assembly

Maulana Nasiruddin, the prayer-leader of Qazi Safi,[1] asked for the explanation of this tradition: "God said: 'If a person commits fornication with a woman and afterwards marries her, then both of them remain fornicators always.' " The Venerable Master said: "The act of intercourse committed by them before their marriage is unlawful. After they get married, that act of fornication is not invalidated because it did not take place after marriage. Thus they will remain forever stained by the sin of fornication. If they repent, however, that sin will not be raised again, but not the removal of the very act of fornication for, if the Qazi finds out about it, he will punish them to the limit, even though they have repented."[2]

The Helpless One said: "What is the divine ordinance with regard to a sin which falls within the boundary of what is predestined? Should a person conceal it, or reveal it before the local authority so that he may punish him to the extent of the Law?" He replied: "It is allowed to reveal it, but there is a better resolution, namely, to conceal the sin but repent it."

In the meantime, one of those present in the assembly asked: "If he conceals it and repents and has not been punished fully here, will he be thoroughly punished in the next life?" He replied: "No, since he concealed it and repented it, the pain and punishment which were due in retribution were remitted. It is related that Ali, the Commander of the Faithful, said that, since God Almighty had concealed something in this life, even though He could have revealed it, it is to be hoped that, by virtue of His benevolence, He will not disgrace and defame him in the next."

NOTES AND RERERENCES

1. It is difficult to give precise information about who Qazi Safi and others were. He clearly had some administrative function.

2. If they repent, God forgives them, but they are still liable to the punishment prescribed by the Law if their sin becomes public.

Tenth Assembly

Qazi Ashrafuddin said: "It is commonly held by people that the rank of anybody in the next life depends on how much fasting, prayer, struggle with self and austerity he has performed during this life. Such a person is known as a 'traveller'. Besides these, there are so many other types of worship, such as service; the acquisition of what is necessary for one's family; putting oneself out for the sake of one's brother Muslims and such like things. Well now, can anyone who practises these things be called a 'traveller', and can he make progress and advance along the Path just as by fasting and praying?"[1] The Venerable Master replied: "Yes, there is progress in these things also, just as in fasting and praying, because as far as arriving is concerned, all are equal. Just as fasting and prayer are prescribed works so too are all of those other things. There is no difference at this level yet, from the point of view that fasting and prayer are forms of worship especially ordained towards God and not reverting to anybody else, they are superior to others."

Again he said: "Those other forms of worship are such that they benefit somebody else, whereas prayer and fasting benefit the person who undertakes them. Hence it is fitting that the former be more excellent than the latter." He replied: "Although prayer and fasting do benefit the person who prays or fasts, that is incidental, not intentional. Even if the Law made no promise of merit for those who comply with the prescriptions concerning prayer and fasting, they would still be obligatory. The fact that an act benefits the person it originates from is incidental, not intentional, for it is ordained to the Lord."

In the meantime, the Helpless One said: "It is written that goods are more excellent than the body for the reason that they pass on to another. Hence they benefit somebody else."

He replied: "Yes and this is borne out in what is auxiliary, but all are equal where obligatory matters are concerned."

In this connection Qazi Ashrafuddin said: "There are very many promises connected with service to one's mother, while there is no clear personal gain from prayer and fasting. Hence the former should be superior to the latter." He replied: "Yes, this would be an excellent thing, as it is mentioned in the Law of Islam that service rendered to one's mother[2] is superior to four things: prayer, fasting, alms-giving and pilgrimage. This involves many acts of superordination."

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. The question is important for the non-professional, the ordinary family man who sincerely wishes to lead a devout and holy life.
2. Sharafuddin was very devoted to his mother. She came to live with him and died in Bihar town. He himself was buried beside his mother's grave.

Eleventh Assembly

Qazi Ashrafuddin said: "Can the fact that some people look for a blessing at the tombs of holy men and offer food for the sake of the departed soul be construed as a proof that the person was a saint?" The Venerable Master replied: "Yes, it is a sign of his sanctity and goodness before God."

Again he asked: "If a person makes an intention over the food he customarily eats for his daily sustenance, saying 'I offer this for the soul of so and so,' how would that be?" He replied: "His intention is to nourish himself, not to eat for the sake of so and so for, even if he did not make any such intention, he would still cook and eat." Afterwards he added: "When a believer eats he performs an act of worship. After eating, if he says: 'I offer the merit that I have acquired for the soul of so and so,' this good intention is laudable. For this reason, if he does so, this will come to pass."

Again he said: "When people recite the 'Fatiha'[1] for the soul of somebody, if they also make this intention in their heart, 'I offer this for the sake of the soul of so and so,' but do not say these words out loud, how would that be?" He replied: "It would be sufficient, but if they were to recite it as well, it would be better for, with regard to intention it is said: 'Intention is in the heart. Moreover, it is a good thing to take it on one's lips.' This is because it is a form of worship. Thus it is clear that, if it is spoken out, there is an increase of merit and there is added worship, but this does not resemble the basic point.[2] What is the need for speaking out aloud? If one does so, however, it would be for the sake of confirming and reiterating it."

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. This is the opening 'sura' (chapter) of the Quran. It is often called the 'Lord's Prayer of Islam' and is widely used in liturgical worship as well as in private devotions.
2. The essential point is that there should be a good intention in a person's heart. Whether one vocalizes this or not is secondary.

Twelfth Assembly

The Helpless One said: "When the Leader of the Faithful, Abu Bakr, the Just One, brought all his goods and possessions and offered them to the Apostle, did he have a family?" The Venerable Master replied: "Yes, so the Apostle asked, 'What have you kept for your family?' He replied: 'God and His Apostle'. "

One enamoured of a beautiful woman headed tavern-
wards:
He preferred the food of one day to what is eternal.

Again he asked: "In the meantime, what would happen to his wife's right, for she had not renounced anything?" He replied: "Belief in One God[1] shines out of them, and nothing else! Compared to this, the former (i.e. goods and possessions) are of little value. Wherever you find something similar in connection with the saints, it bears this meaning." And he said:

When dawn comes the lamp departs and recited this couplet:

The very hour He thinks of me,
I forget whether I exist or not.

Again he enquired: "Didn't his wife say anything to him in this connection?" He replied: "God knows whether she did or whether she didn't." He added: "Daily sustenance is necessary. If there is an abundance of this, then what? Isn't it fitting that his wife should be friendly and accommodating in this matter?"

Again he asked: "Was that the Righteous Abu Bakr's permanent condition, namely that he had nothing to do with goods for the sake of providing for his family?" He replied:

"Yes, it remained permanent, and he was righteous and had nothing to do with goods. Whatever he used to receive from the Hidden was sufficient for him. After being in that condition, he was related to the Hidden."

The commands of intellect and love cannot mix:
There would be an uproar — two kings in one country!

Again he asked: "Was there something like these customs which have arisen nowadays with regard to lawful marriages—such as the concourse of men and women—in the time of the Apostle, the companions and the ancient ones?" He replied: "It all took place, but not to the extent that it occurs nowadays. There was a gathering. Whoever happened to be around was invited. He would sit for a while, then rise up and leave, but it was not on such a lavish scale as nowadays. The reason for this was that they were consumed with grief regarding what was to come. Their hearts were immersed in that. If a son was born to them, no rejoicing on this account could arise together with that. If, after a while, the baby died, neither would that entail a hundred expressions of grief. At every moment and in every circumstance death, the grave and the Day of Resurrection were before their gaze. Whatever rejoicing or activity arose was driven away. Hence we could sum up by saying that they were neither at peace nor at rest with anything. People can rejoice in things only as long as they remain unmindful of their end."

The world apportioned sorrow for me:
I should eat what has been assigned to me.

Also:

Day's gladness is followed by evening's sorrow:
When experiencing the former, remember the latter.

Again he asked: "In the age when men were overcome by this sorrow, did this also apply to women?" [2] He replied: "It applied to women as well as men." He then recited this couplet:

Anyone unmoved by Your intoxicating magic
Is someone not destined for Your world.

He said: "In those days the hearts of all were pure. That is why all these sorrows arose." Afterwards he added: "That sorrow is not found in the hearts of today. Excess in customs necessarily ensues."

The Helpless One asked: "Concerning the conditions of association, it is written that anyone who chooses to associate with this group abandons, first of all, his own portion and lot. This pertains to his worldly goods and possessions, but should it also refer to his destiny in the world to come?" He replied: "Well, it is also included in worldly favour and fortune because it is an obstacle included in worldly blessings. If someone lays claim to what is another's, and that person has need of it then, if he does not hand it over, fighting and struggling will arise between them because that thing will not reach the former until it is separated from the latter. Take this sash for example. If someone takes it from me, it becomes separated from me. This is the sort of obstruction found in worldly blessings. If a particular person, however, has many possessions, he does not need them all. If this is the situation, and somebody makes a request of him, he should immediately give. In this giving, even though it does not cost him much, the thing does pass from him. With respect to blessings of the next world, however, there is no obstruction. If they are bestowed, what diminution is there? It does not happen that other-worldly blessings are separated from those who bestow them on others. They remain where they are. There is no constriction in them, nor the obstruction which is inherent in an abundance of worldly blessings. No matter how often other-worldly blessings are given away, they never decrease. Thus it is that there is no enmity or hostility among the scholars of the world to come, whereas there is contradiction and discord among scholars of this world."

O Saadi, many have travelled the path of the intellect
Who knew not the way to the world of madmen.

Again he asked: "Which is better: to enquire of sages with both heart and tongue about the blessings to come, or to remain content with their lustre? He replied: "There are some who, on occasion, have also made requests, while some others

have not done so. They have proceeded on this supposition: 'If it has been decreed for me in the divine knowledge, it will reach me.'[3] They wait for that time to come, and consider this sufficient.

I have tried a thousand methods of union with You
To what profit? Strength of arm cannot gain this wealth.

Some, in fact, have not made any request because they do not see themselves as worthy of any blessing, neither in this world nor in the next. They question themselves thus: 'Who am I to ask for blessings? I am not worthy of anything, either in this world or the next.'[4] This quality overcomes all others. In the light of this they are borne beyond the desire of either world."

How could I be able to read and learn of You?
But I can—if You make me worthy of You!

Again the Helpless One asked: "What is needed for this illumination?" He replied: "He should have become non-existent, and know that he is excluded from the whole world." Afterwards he added: "This quality overcomes all others. Let a person acquire such a quality within himself so that he may emerge completely from all thought or desire of self." Afterwards he said: "It is a good thing to entertain a poor opinion with regard to oneself."

I don't know why I stay on living, captive in this nature:
I'm not a Hindu, Muslim, or apostate—just a sinner.

The Helpless One asked:[5] "If a discussion about some point of learning or some problem arises in a gathering, and everybody begins to say something about the matter, if something comes to a person's mind, which is better: to speak out, or hold one's peace?" He replied: "It would be better for him to refrain from speaking. The reason is this: by speaking, first of all he makes a display of himself. This is not the occasion to do so. Moreover, it could happen that he might injure another person. And again, nowadays it is a very rare occurrence that the object of a discussion is to seek the truth in order that some hidden matter may be laid bare. For the most part it is for the sake of self-display or upsetting somebody else."[6]

Debate, discussion and seclusion in a mosque are good,
But better far intoxicated cries from an assembly of friends!

Again the Helpless One asked: "Does this mean that it requires a great struggle with one's carnal soul?"[7] He replied: "It is a great struggle for him to know and yet remain silent, for his carnal soul comes to life when he utters 'I know', yet it is extremely beneficial for him to hide this fact." The Venerable Master praised this virtue and its explanation, lavishing the highest possible encomium upon it. Afterwards he said: "This very point is applicable to all praiseworthy virtues. Keeping hidden and not disclosing anything that might be the fruit of some laudable quality is to pierce one's carnal soul with a sword! It requires great self-control and cannot be too highly praised."

I gaze on the rose: thornless, it would be better!
So too if strangers were not to know the secret thoughts of
friends.

Again he asked: "If there is some laudable quality which weighs upon the carnal soul and a person cannot be happy without displaying it, what should he do, since it is a service?" He replied: "Restraint is necessary and also within his power. Moreover, if he says in front of another, 'I have done this' then this is boasting. Also, in rendering service nothing is absolutely necessary. That is acquisition."

Again he said: "There should be an essential meaning from which various other meanings are derived and which should itself be cultivated at all times." He replied: "In each situation there is something of essential significance, just as the Propounder of the Law (i.e. Muhammad) has said: 'Hold the command of God Almighty in esteem, for 'Praise is due to the command of God, and mercy to the creatures of God.' ' As far as the rights of the Lord are concerned, they can all be summed up in this single saying: 'Praised be the commands of God.' As regards the rights of men, they can all be summed up in this single expression. 'And mercy to the creatures of God.' These two sayings apply to all situations. In every eventuality one of these two will be applicable in such a way that they can

never both be absent: either a right of the Lord is at stake, or one of man."

Afterwards he related this story: "Once somebody came to the Prophet and became a Muslim. The Prophet told a friend to instruct him in the Quran. That friend was teaching him the Quran when he came to the chapter, 'The Earthquake' and read: 'Whoever has done an atom's weight of good shall see it, and whoever has done an atom's weight of evil shall see it also' (Q 99: 7-8). He said: 'That is enough for me.' After a few days the Apostle enquired of his friend how the instruction was going. He replied: 'O Apostle of God, when he reached the verse, 'Whoever has done an atom's weight of good shall see it, and whoever has done an atom's weight of evil shall see it also' (Q 99: 7-8), he said: 'That is enough for me.' He got up and went to his tribe. The Prophet said: 'The man had become a jurisconsult.' "

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. This translation of 'tauhid' directs our attention immediately to the object of faith—the One, Unique God. 'Belief in the unity of God' seems defective on two scores: it directs our faith to an abstraction; and the word 'unity' in common speech implies something arrived at through union, i.e. duality, at the very least, is involved. This implication is obviated in the above translation.

2. This is one of the rare questions about the spiritual life of women. It will be obvious to the reader that the Master's teaching is directed towards a male clientele. This reflects the age in which Sharafuddin lived. For example, when he lay dying he was surrounded by disciples upon whom he showered many signs of affection. Only one woman, however, paid him a fleeting visit. (cf. *Wafāt Nāma*)

3. Sharafuddin is not advocating total passivity. The whole tenor of his teaching is that a disciple must steadfastly pursue his aim of working towards union with God. He does say—as the following couplet indicates—that union with God nevertheless remains a gift of God's grace.

4. Grammatically the plural form is used, but these intimately personal questions are best (and legitimately) translated by the singular, indicating—as in the writer's mind—that each person asks himself these questions.

5. This portion is missing from A, but found in BCD & E. It is included on the basis of this evidence.

6. Sharafuddin had little time for sterile religious debate. On one occasion, for example, he got angry with Muzaffar Shams Balkhi, his chief disciple, on account of his behaviour during a debate about the created or uncreated nature of the Quran (cf. *Ganj-i lā Yakhfā*, assembly 41).

7. 'Nafs'.

Thirteenth Assembly

Sheikh Ahmad said: "During this life the body executes the commands of the soul,[1] but in the next life, after a man dies, does his soul remain in the condition it was previously in?" The Venerable Master replied: "Yes, the soul remains as it was." Afterwards he said: "Before death the relationship of the soul to the body is like that of an artisan to an instrument. The relationship of an artisan to an instrument is no more. For example, it does not mean that, if the instrument does not perdure, the death of the artisan takes place. The same is true for the soul: the soul has no dependence on the body for its continued existence. It is no more than this: the soul operates through the instrumentality of this body. Through the instrumentality of the tongue, it speaks; through that of the feet, it walks; while eyes enable it to see."

Here the Helpless One asked: "Is the body the place where the commands of the soul are manifested?" He replied: "Yes, in this visible world, but by the will of God."[2] Afterwards he added: "Just as the activities of the soul[3] in this visible and tangible world make their appearance in the body, so too the commands of God Most High from the 'greater world' are made manifest in the soul."[4] Again he said: "When the soul operates through the body, the latter is ignorant of the former. It does not know what has come into existence through the soul as its origin. Does the same apply to the soul in so far as it perceives the manifestation of the commands of God?" He replied: "The soul does become aware of this, and perceives that the commands of God make their appearance within it. The soul bears witness to that. The soul is aware, and knowledge is one of its qualities, but the body is inert, so what can it know about the soul?"

Again he asked: "Do all souls enjoy this knowledge and perception, namely both those of believers and infidels?" He

replied: "Yes, in this affair it does not matter whether a person is a believer or an infidel."[5]

Again he asked: "Since the souls of infidels experience this knowledge and perception, where do they derive their infidelity and rejection from, for rejection and acceptance come from the soul. All should have accepted." He replied: "Before souls were sent into this world they were absolutely pure.[6] After they became related to the world of the body two things were acquired by them: one, the acquisition of good; and the other, the acquisition of evil. In so far as they acquire evil, to that same extent a stain causes a blemish in their purity. Thus it is that they do not remain spotlessly pure as they were when they came. On account of this stain they are deceived and end up in rejection." Afterwards he added: "Because he has been stained by the acquisition of evil such a one will be burnt tomorrow in the fire until his stain is far removed from him, for it is said: 'Whoever cleanses himself today in the fire of struggle with self and austerities will leave nothing within himself for the fire of tomorrow.' "

I find it astonishing that, among lovers,
Ardour does not set their clothes ablaze.

Sheikh Mu'izzuddin asked the meaning of the following couplet:

It behoves You that, at every twinkle of an eye,
No one would remain alive for a moment.

He replied: "One will understand by this 'twinkling' that, 'faced with the awareness of Your lordship, it is not proper for anyone to remain alive.' Another will think thus: 'In the face of the wonders of Your power and Your command.' A third will think: 'Faced with Your wrath and glory, it is fitting that no one should remain alive.' "

Where in the world is a wise-hearted cock which,
Though trussed, would not offer its life for You?

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. The word is 'rūḥ' not 'nafs' and refers to the life-giving principle in man. Sharafuddin's views on the soul become apparent from the text (and from letter 71 in *The Hundred Letters*).

2. Sharafuddin is clearly at home in a voluntaristic understanding of creation. This is a statement, not a criticism, for it would be unfair that he was a blind voluntarist. For him, creatures have their clearly-defined status and inherent composition but precisely because they are in existence as willed by God, it is the will of God (mashiy-yat-i Haqq) which is of overriding importance for him.

3. He switches to 'jān' here.

4. 'Rūḥ' is found here, but he then reverts to 'jān'. Both are used in this whole discussion to refer to the soul. There is a definite Platonic, rather than Aristotelean stamp to Sharafuddin's concept of the soul.

5. Sharafuddin is extraordinarily catholic in his spiritual outlook. This same trait is also found in some of the great English mystics of the fourteenth century but is in sharp contrast to the prevailing religious perspective in either of the two great revelatory religions

6. This statement is definitely Platonic.

Fourteenth Assembly

The Helpless One asked: "If somebody has a dream in which a man's head is severed from his body, what would the interpretation be for the person dreaming?" He replied: "Which group did the man who had the dream belong to?" He answered: "He was a solitary." He replied: "The interpretation of this dream does not apply to solitaries, for they have no connection with it. The normal interpretation is that whoever has such a dream is slaying his own carnal soul and is escaping from its clutches. This interpretation is inappropriate for a solitary. For such a person the meaning is that the patronage and assistance he receives from somebody is about to be cut off from him because he depends upon him, just as the body depends on the head. It is in this sense that the interpretation applies to the severance of patronage and assistance."

Qazi Khan[1] asked: "What would it mean if a wild animal attacks somebody in a dream?" He replied: "He would notice whether the wild animal overcomes him or not. If it does overcome him, he should realize that the quality associated with that animal has entered him and gained the ascendancy. This is because the qualities of all animals have been said to be found in man. For example, if someone dreams that a lion is attacking him and overcomes him, this is interpreted to mean that he has been overcome by anger, for anger and rage are associated with lions and dogs. In a similar way, those who dream about foxes interpret it as flattery and fawning, for these qualities are associated with foxes. Interpretation of a dream about leopards is that pride has overcome the dreamer, for pride and rebellion pertain to leopards. A person who dreams about pigs is said to be ensnared by lust and to be a thoroughly base follow." Afterwards he added: "Ain ul-Quzat has written that a traveller encounters a hundred thousand different qualities on his Path. At each encounter he thinks: 'This is the real me.[2] I have att-

ained my true reality.' [3] That, however, is not him, but is from him." [4]

Sheikh Mu'izzuddin put this question: "What interpretation is given for dreams about oxen and similar beasts?" He replied: "Oxen and similar beasts indicate eating, sleeping and taking life easy. The interpretation is that such qualities have overcome him, namely food, sleep and an easy life."

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. The printed version (D) has 'Ashrafuddin'.
2. 'Ḥaqīqat-i man hamīn ast'.
3. 'Beḥaqīqat-i man rasīdam'.
4. 'Valī ān na ūst lekin ham az ūst'.

Fifteenth Assembly

Sheikh Mu'izzuddin said: "How should a dream be interpreted in which a person sees lightning strike and flames erupt?" The Venerable Master, after pausing for a while, said: "Disaster is about to strike the city in which a person has such a dream."

This Helpless One enquired: "To which group does this Quranic verse apply: 'God Almighty said: You think they are united, but their hearts are divided' (Q 59:14)." He replied: "It was revealed with regard to infidels when the Apostle was preparing to do battle with some of them. He had only a small force with him for the battle, while the infidels had a very large one. For this reason the Apostle grew hesitant. The thought occurred to him that the infidels did have a large force, whereas his own was quite small. This was the occasion of the revelation of this verse: 'You think they are united, but their hearts are divided.' In other words, although they have the numbers their hearts are scattered. No heart is united to any other. For this reason, although they number thousands, this will not benefit them."

Afterwards he related this story: "A friend of God related that a dervish from the North[1] arrived in Multan during the time of Sheikh Sadruddin.[2] After some days he requested permission from his sheikh to visit Delhi and meet the learned and holy men of that city. The sheikh granted him permission. The dervish set out and reached Delhi. He spent one night there. The following morning he set out for Multan. Upon his return he visited his sheikh. He asked him the reason for his hasty return. By way of reply, the dervish said: 'You think they are united but their hearts are divided.' (Q 59:14)"

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. Afghanistan, or beyond, is being referred to.
2. Sadruddin, (d. 1285 A.D.) was the eldest son and spiritual successor of the famous Suhrawardi saint of Multan, Bahauddin Zakariya (d. 1267).

Sixteenth Assembly

Jalaluddin Mahjub said: "What are the questions Munkir and Nakir[1] will ask in the grave, and what are the answers?" The Venerable Master replied: "They will ask: 'Who is your Lord, and who is your prophet, and what is your religion.' The reply is: 'God is my Lord and yours; my prophet is Muhammad—peace be upon him; and my religion is Islam.' "

Khwaja Mamman Multani[2] was present in the honourable assembly. Somebody began to say that Khwaja Mamman, at that time, was bringing to completion many works of Muslims. The Venerable Master said: "Excellent! What wealth! A hundred prayers and fasts will not achieve what one work of a believer will. Furthering the works of the Muslims and exerting oneself with the affairs of the people is great wealth indeed. This is the task of the prophets who undertook the work of the people and bore their afflictions."

Afterwards he recounted this story: "When I was in that old cave,[3] there was a military governor there.[4] He did not have a very good way of dealing with the people, many of whom would come to me to get me to intercede on their behalf. I used to do so for each one of them. I would write down their request, but a great number of people began to mob me for this purpose. From time to time my human nature asserted itself and I got annoyed.[5] Sheikh Zada Chishti[6]—may God keep him safe—happened to be there at the time. It so happened that he had come to visit me[7] in that place. He observed that this business proved vexatious for me on some occasions and that I grew annoyed. Afterwards he said: 'So you are annoyed. Be careful not to get annoyed.[8] Take upon yourself the affliction of the people.' "[8]

He related this story: "There is a place called 'Hariv'—or some such name[9]—situated some days' journey from Chisht. A

certain gentleman had some work with a man of that place but he was unable to bring the work to a satisfactory conclusion. At that time the revered Sheikh Maudud Chishti[10] was the spiritual leader in Chisht. The man came from that place and explained the whole situation to his spiritual guide. He made this request: 'Master, my work depends upon your going there. If you come and intercede with that man on my behalf my work will be accomplished.' The Revered Sheikh immediately complied with his request. He said: 'If it is true that your work will be accomplished by my going, then I shall set out immediately.' Thereupon he stood up, threw his prayer-carpet over his shoulder and set out. Some of his disciples followed him, wondering where their sheikh was going. They did not have the courage to ask him. They thought he was visiting some shrine. The whole day passed by but they did not reach their destination. At last they heard that a certain man had come and made a request. Finally Khwaja Maudud reached the place and, going up to the man, presented his request.

Now it so happened that he did not accede to the request of the Khwaja, so his work was not accomplished. The Khwaja said to the man: 'I have done what I undertook to do. The successful completion of any work depends upon God. What do you now have to say?' He replied: 'Return home in peace.' So he came home.

After the sheikh returned home everyone began to say to that other man: 'The Revered Sheikh did not write to you, nor did he send anyone to you in connection with this work, but he came himself and you paid no attention to what he had to say.' At last this resulted in his feeling sorry. He said: 'The work will be done when the Revered Sheikh himself returns.' The petitioner once again came to the Revered Khwaja and said: 'Master, once again the success of my work depends upon your coming. Be gracious to me just once again.' He replied immediately: 'So it depends on my coming, does it?' Flinging his prayer-carpet over his shoulder, he set out. The work was at last accomplished. Upon his return to Chisht, the disciples questioned him about his reason for going: 'Master, if you had written something, or had sent somebody, it would have been the same. You could have gone yourself later on.' He replied:

'He had not requested me to write something on his behalf or to send somebody but had said that his work depended on my going. Since this was so, it was necessary for me to go myself.' "

When the Venerable Master reached this point in his narrative he said: "Bringing to completion the work of a brother Muslim is a great undertaking. What have saintly men and sheikhs said about this group's[11] going to the doors of the great or not? They have said that they should go if the king summons them. If they fail to do so, it would be heretical. If he does not call them, however, they should not go, unless it be for the sake of some Muslim. If he knows that his going will accomplish something then, in such a situation, he should approach the doors of kings. In the *Iḥyā-i 'ulūm*, for example, it is mentioned that a certain prophet had steadied the king's stirrup to enable him to mount his steed. People were quite astonished by this incident. They said: 'What is this? One of God's prophets is holding the king's stirrup to enable him to mount?' The prophet replied: 'I took hold of his stirrup so that he might become favourably inclined towards me. Once he favours me and holds me in affection then, if somebody has some work to get done, it can be accomplished through my request and intercession.[12] This is why I steadied the king's stirrup.' "

When the Venerable Master reached this point he lavished praise on this intention, urging those present to do similar things by saying several times, "What an admirable purpose!"

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. These are the two angels said to interrogate the dead once they are interred.
2. The name indicates he was from Multan. His presence would be particularly significant if he had come all the way to Bihar simply to meet Sharafuddin, which was not at all unlikely.
3. The reference—actually 'ḥujra' (cell)—is to cave in Rajgir in which Sharafuddin spent some time before being coaxed into Bihar town. Together with a spring and a tiny mosque, and other buildings, the shrine is called 'Makhdūm Kund'.
4. The Persian has 'malik' and 'īnjā' (here) but, as Sharafuddin was speaking in the khanqah in Bihar, some eighteen kilometres away, 'there' is used.
5. 'Tangī mī āmadam'.

6. He was apparently on a visit from Chisht. What is of significance is that he came to visit Sharafuddin while he was still in his cave. As is clear from the text, he was already very well known and revered before moving into Bihar town.

7. We have to presume that he heard of Sharafuddin only when he had reached Hindustan, not that he had heared of him in Chisht.

8. 'Balā-ye khalq rā bekashīd'.

9. Probably Harv is meant. The uncertainty is Sharafuddin's, not Sheikh Zada Chishti's.

10. Maudud Chishti (d. 1133 A.D.) was the fourth successor of Abu Ishaq Chishti, the founder of the Chishti order.

11. Different Sufi orders had different approaches to this whole question. The position of Sharafuddin's group—i.e. the Firdausi order—is clearly outlined in the text.

12. People living in modern Bihar know that this is still the way things are done.

Seventeenth Assembly

After the evening prayer he (i.e. Zain Badr Arabi) went along with the other disciples to wish the Master a happy new month. Qazi Ashrafuddin said: "It has been related that one hour's meditation[1] is better than a year's worship. Meditation thus enjoys an excellence over other forms of worship. What can be said, however, about some holy men who perform two or three hundred rounds of prayer each day or night? What is the purpose of this? If they were engaged in meditation, wouldn't they already be occupied with a form of worship which enjoys excellence over others?"

The Venerable Master replied: "This would be so in the sense that meditation has an excellence over supererogatory prayers,[2] but it is also true that everything has a specific quality which cannot be found except in that particular thing. A person's aim is to acquire spiritual perfections for himself. There are ways in which a person can acquire the inner meanings of these perfections. Obligatory prayer, for example, has a specific quality which is not found except in prayer. Those who engage in daily prayer do so in order to perceive this specific excellence, become aware of it, and acquire these perfections for themselves."

Afterwards he said: "This discussion reverts to the fact that some abandon daily prayer saying that it, fasting and other forms of worship are needed only as long as a person has still to attain what he was seeking and aiming at. When this is accomplished, the need for all these things disappears, for they are all ways and means. A person needs to utilize them as long as he has not yet arrived at the stage he was aiming at. When this stage is reached, there is no need to occupy oneself with them.

In reply to this, however, I say[3] that, if the only purpose of

daily prayer was that it was a means, then what you say[4] would be true. There are other purposes in prayer besides this, however, which neither you nor I know about, nor shall we attain to."

In the pause which followed, Qazi Ashrafuddin said: "If he were to ask how you knew that there were these other aspects to prayer, what would you say?" He replied: "The interlocutor should investigate the matter for himself. I would say that there is a consensus among the theologians and spiritual masters in this matter, for the prophets were the men closest of all to God. Now if the only purpose of daily prayer was that it was a means, then the prophets would not have continued praying, for such an occupation, after having attained union, would be profitless. Everybody knows, however, that the prophets were ever faithful to daily prayer. None of the theologians and great sheikhs who are acceptable to all has ever abandoned daily prayer. Hence it can be known that those who remain faithful and do not abandon prayer do so because they have perceived therein deep meanings and secrets."

They are astonished at me, saying: What did you see therein?
But what do the blind know about the blessings of vision?

Again he enquired: "Could it not be that they did so to instruct the people?" He replied: "Once would have been sufficient, or a few times, in order to instruct the people. Moreover, what was the need of instructing them by good example? Verbal instruction would have sufficed."

Again he asked: "What would you say if someone said it was not to instruct the people but applied especially to them (i.e. the prophets) and thus became current?" He replied: "If it had applied especially to them they would have said so, as happened with so many other things which pertained only to them, for they stated clearly what was special to them." Afterwards he added: "Daily prayer is all-embracing, including glorifying and praising God, bowing and prostrating, praise and petition, recital of the Quran and sitting respectfully. In each of these—indeed, in every movement and pause—there is a

secret and special quality which manifests itself to them and, by means of which, they acquire perfections.

From the point of view of excellence, meditation is superior to other forms of worship. Nevertheless, what is found in prayer is not found in it, as has come to us in the tradition which states that anyone who recites the chapter 'Ikhlāṣ' three times acquires as much merit as someone who recites the whole Quran. Can we infer from this that a person should not recite the other chapters of the Quran? With regard to merit, the recital of 'Ikhlāṣ' is as stated, but when one considers the secrets, promises and warnings, stories and similar things, as well as knowledge of the first and the last things which are contained in the Quran, then what would you say if a person did not recite it? Should he forsake it? If the only purpose of reciting it was to acquire merit, and it so happened that three recitals of 'Ikhlāṣ' was as meritorious as reciting the whole Quran, then people would not recite the rest. From the point of view, however, that the Quran contains so many thousand secrets, mystical meanings, promises and warnings, counsels and knowledge of the first and last things, it has to be said that these cannot be acquired except by reciting the Quran." Afterwards he added: "This serves as a good example to refute those who advocate abandoning prayer, affirming it is simply a means—but God is the guide to the right path!"

Afterwards he asked: "When a person is seeking spiritual perfections then that is why he engages in something. This purpose is achieved in daily prayer. What is the point of getting engrossed in extra prayers?" He replied: "From the point of view of prayer, obligatory prayer and those added for devotion's sake are the same. The perfections that can be obtained from the former can also be gleaned from the latter. Such people are greedily engaged in acquiring perfections."

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. The word is 'tafakkur' and could also be translated as 'prayerful reflection'. The point is that the mind is used, in a prayerful manner, to reflect on reality and the truths of religion. (cf. letter 60 in *The Hundred Letters*).

2. These prayers are often added to the five daily prayers prescribed by Islamic Law.

3. Very rarely does Sharafuddin say straight out 'I say' (here in the plural form but meaning 'I' with emphasis). It is an indication of the importance of what he is about to say.

4. He is addressing an imaginary interlocutor.

Eighteenth Assembly

He (i.e. Zain) had the good fortune of being invited to a special banquet[1] after the evening prayer. A discussion arose about the fellowship of animals with men. The Venerable Master said: "In science it is mentioned that all animals are like man insofar as speech is concerned, for every animal that exists makes a sound which amounts to its form of speech, so that all of them understand the sounds of others of their kind. We simply have not attained that stage."

At this point Sheikh Mu'izzuddin said: "Consider, for example, the crowing of cocks. When one cock crows all the others immediately understand his cry and gather together." The Venerable Master said: "Yes, the cry of the cock, which he has mentioned, is a good example." Afterwards he added: "As far as their speech is concerned, all the animals enjoy a fellowship with man, as has been mentioned, but not with regard to writing, which pertains specifically to man."

Sheikh Mu'izzuddin said: "It would not be correct to classify them as rational beings for 'man is the rational animal.' Rational speech is proper to man." He said: "Yes, it would not be correct to call them rational beings."

A discussion about the intellect arose. He said: "Concerning this verse, 'When he reached maturity We gave him wisdom and knowledge.' (Q 12:22) I have seen, in a work of exegesis, that it is explained thus: 'A child grows to maturity while it is said that a man reaches maturity at forty years.' Whoever reaches maturity has done so through the natural power of his intellect, and whoever has done this has learnt by testing things with his intellect. Man's perceptions are not gained except in these two ways. This is illustrated by: 'the rising sun and the eye of the beholder.' In order to attain perception both 'the rising sun and the eye of the beholder' must be pre-

sent. If this is not so, nothing can be perfectly perceived. For example, if the sun has risen yet there is no eye to behold it, no perception occurs, for there is no seeing by any eyes. Hence there is no perfect perception by man apart from these two things, one 'the rising sun' and the other 'the eye of the beholder'. In other words, these two things are man's natural intellect and his practical intellect."[2]

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. If the Master was at a banquet, people went for nourishment of mind and soul from his discourse rather than for the food. It was the Master's presence rather than the quality of the food which made the banquet special.

2. The terms are ' 'aql-i fiṭrati' and ' 'aql-i tajrabatī'. It is difficult to see the parallel.

Nineteenth Assembly

Sheikh Mu'izzuddin said: "It is said that on Thursday evenings the doors of Paradise are flung open. Is this true or not?" The Venerable Master replied: "It is attested to by sayings and traditions and it could be true that this is so. What cause for astonishment is there if one day is blessed?"

Again he asked: "What is the effect of the doors of Paradise being opened?" He replied: "When the doors of Paradise are flung open, the result is that the mercy of the Lord descends upon His servants. As a result of this, there is an increase in their acts of devotion and perfections. For example, it is related in a work of exegesis that the angels of heaven call Friday the 'Day of Increase'."[1] Afterwards he added: "I had some doubt and anxiety about this question of increase. At that time I saw, in *'Aqida* (The Creed) a discussion on the sinlessness of the prophets. There it was related that the prophets made progress and increased at all times, at each moment and at every breath. It was also related that, in the event that some fault appeared in them then how, in that situation, could there be any progress and increase? In addition our prophet, on the Night of Ascent,[2] acquired a perfection of increase and progress which was not so for other nights. Hence, how could there be any increase and progress on other nights?

The book contained answers to both these questions. Firstly, with regard to the Ascent he says that what happened to the Apostle on the Night of Ascent remained with him on subsequent nights. It did not depart from him. The other acts of devotion and worship which he performed during subsequent nights were all increase with regard to what happened during the Ascent. Hence there was progress and increase. With regard to faults, the answer is that, although there is no increase or progress in a fault nevertheless, after repenting it, expres-

sing grief and repentance and shedding tears, then this would be progress and increase."

Again he asked: "What is meant by a fault?[3] He replied: "A fault is a slip.[4] It is an unintentional lapse.[5] This is what is known as a fault with regard to the prophets. It is not called a sin.[6] A fault is something which, before falling into it, is not intended and, after the fall, there is no acquiescence. For example, when it rains and the road gets muddy it can happen that someone walking along it might slip in the mud and fall. Before his foot slipped he had no intention of slipping and falling and, when he falls, he immediately gets up. He does not remain lying there. This is exactly what the faults of the prophets are. They are small, unintentional lapses."

Afterwards he said: "In the chapter about Joseph these things are mentioned here and there in '*Aqīda*. They pose problems which have also been answered very well. Firstly, it is related in the following verse that Joseph said: 'Take this tunic of mine and fling it on my father's face' (Q 12:93). Now he said 'fling it' meaning 'fling my tunic on my father's face.' He did not say, 'Take this to my father!' What wisdom is contained in this?

He has given a very good reply to this, namely that Joseph knew that, when his tunic reached Jacob, he would be beside himself with joy and, in his joy, would reach the stage of foregetting what he was about. He would not rub the tunic on his eyes. That is why he said, 'Fling it on my father's face,' so that the tunic might reach the blessed face of the prophet Jacob. His sight was thereupon restored.

On the day of union there is no rest in seeing,
In the night of separation there is no repose for me.

And again,

The hour that He thinks of me
I forget whether I exist or not.[7]

Again, it is asked therein how Joseph knew that his sight would be restored by sending his tunic. The answer given is that he knew that his blindness too had resulted from his tunic, namely when Joseph's brothers had taken his blood-stained

tunic to the prophet Jacob his sight failed him. Hence he sent his tunic so that it might result in the restoration of his sight.

Again it is asked what wisdom is involved in Joseph's sending his own tunic, not something else. The reply given to this is that the difficulty arose from the tunic. Hece he sent it so that relief might also spring from it.

O postman, what news are you bearing to my friend?
O that in your stead I had been the one sent!

Again with regard to this verse, 'I smell the fragrance of Joseph' (Q I2 : 94) namely, when Joseph removed his tunic from his blessed body the prophet Jacob caught the fragrance of the prophet Joseph. 'It is mentioned that Can'aan is eighty leagues from Egypt and mutual knowledge and power is not such that the fragrance of one could reach eighty leagues. This is far from being comprehensible.

One reply is given in this fashion, namely that it could happen because Joseph was extraordinarily handsome. He boasted a beauty that none other, to the eastern or western extremities of the earth, could match. Similarly, his fragrance too was so special that distance was of no consequence. Hence his fragrance reached Jacob."

Every night, desiring you, I trudged around the garden
Seeking your fragrance from fresh jasmine and hyacinth.

At this point Qazi Ashrafuddin said: "If this were so then, since it reached Jacob, why didn't it reach the others? It should have reached them as well." He replied: "This difficulty has been raised in that very place and answered in this fashion, namely that others were heedless of it. That is why they did not catch the fragrance of Joseph. Jacob, however, was in quest of him and also engrossed in him, not remaining at all inattentive. That is why he caught his fragrance. Although it reached others, they failed to perceive it because they were inattentive.

Men of this world traverse desert and garden:
For the lively hearted they are the Beloved's lane.

Another answer given is that there is such strength that the odour, whether offensive or pleasant, is wafted by the wind

from place to place. In this situation what difference does it make whether it is close by or far off? It could have been caught up and carried by the wind.

Between You and me where is the space for 'between'?
Between you and me there is no place for 'between'.

It is also mentioned that, when the prophet Joseph removed the veil from his face in front of his brothers they did not recognize him. He returned to the assembly. The prophet Joseph said to his brothers, 'And bring all your people with you' (Q 12:93), namely 'Bring my father and his family to me.'

It is mentioned that the prophet Joseph was the son and the prophet Jacob was the father. Now a son should go to his father, not a father to his son. The answer given to the difficulty is that Joseph was the beloved and Jacob the lover. The lover seeks while the beloved is sought, and the seeker certainly goes in quest of the sought, not the other way round."

At this point Qazi Ashrafuddin observed that the question pertained to the ambit of the Law, whereas the answer was from the world of longing. The answer, however, should also have pertained to the Law. In answer, he said: "There is also an answer based on the Law, namely that Joseph was a king and the responsibility of affairs of state rested upon him. If he himself had gone it could have happened that confusion might have arisen in the affairs of the kingdom. Again, if Joseph had gone himself he would have travelled with retinue and servants as befitted a king and Jacob would not have been in a position to offer hospitality to so many followers and attendants. It would have proved injurious to him and would necessarily have involved a kind of insult to him. Both of these replies are based on the Law."

Afterwards he said: "It is also related with respect to the love of Jacob that he was a prophet as was also Joseph. Although they were prophets they were also human beings. How could a prophet have so much love for a man, a creature, for everybody knows that love of another involves fragmenting the love of God,[8] and that applies particularly to prophets.

Apart from Your beauty, any sight is a burden for my eyes:
Any speech, other than Yours, is forbidden for my ears.

The reply given is that the prophets view all things thoughtfully and with circumspection. Thus it was that Jacob found a special quality and refinement in all his sons but, when he looked at Joseph, he saw in him so many gifts and benefits, as well as much mercy, and a refinement and beauty not found in his other sons. Thus Jacob's love was for what was within Joseph, not for Joseph.[9]

Friends, sew up your external eyes:
For us a hidden meaning lies therein.

Every time he looked at Joseph those virtues would swim into sight so that, in this verse 'O what sorrow Joseph has' the interpretation has been given in this fashion: 'O what sorrow for what is within Joseph.' "

A short-sighted person looks upon the page of a beloved face:
He sees every line, and is aware of God's creative pen.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. 'Yaum ul-mazīd'. It is worth mentioning that Thursday evening, in the Muslim reckoning, was really Friday, which began at sunset, Thursday.
2. cf. Quran 17:I.
3. 'Zallat'.
4. 'Laghzīdan ast'.
5. 'dar ṣaghīrah buwad bī qaṣd'.
6. This word for sin—'ma'ṣiyat'—implies rebellion and disobedience towards what is commanded by God. Obviously such a sin cannot be unintentional.
7. This verse, as happens elsewhere, has already been quoted. Sharafuddin has his favourites which he does not hesitate to use whenever they seem appropriate to him. On some occasions interpolation is not to be excluded.
8. 'Shirk ast dar muḥabbat-i Haqq'.
9. There are obvious metaphysical difficulties involved in such a statement.

Twentieth Assembly

A discussion arose about the torment and the comfort of the grave. Maulana Karimuddin asked what the torment of the grave was based upon. The Venerable Master replied: "A singly-transmitted tradition."[1] Afterwards he said, "Articles of belief do not depend on analogy and a singly-transmitted tradition. In order to believe in something there should be irrefutable proof that there is no doubt or suspicion in it. Analogy, however, and a singly-transmitted tradition are a surmise. Nevertheless, when such a tradition is found in several places it is proved to be worthy of credence. In this matter there are many singly-transmitted traditions which have attained the status of 'repeated'."[2]

After this he added: "There is also a text from the Book. If it is not linked to a tradition it can be proved from that text. This is sufficient."

The Helpless One enquired, "Which text is that?" He replied "It concerns Pharaoh and his people. 'They were overwhelmed by the Flood then made to enter the fire' of hell (Q 71:25). This is for the sake of delaying. Thrusting into the fire of hell occurs after being drowned. This cannot but be in the grave, not in hell, for that is after the Day of Resurrection."

Again the Helpless One asked a question: "Where is there a reference to other infidels?" He replied: "The proof with regard to other infidels is based on the text which says that infidelity also applies to others."

Again he asked: "With regard to a Muslim who is a sinner, how does it happen that his infidelity is destroyed?" He replied: "It can be said of him that his soul is against the command of the Lord and that a warning should be taken according to the usual sense of a word, not some special meaning. Moreover,

this degree of difference should be maintained that the torment of the grave, with respect to infidels, would be a matter of necessity whereas, with sinners (i.e. Muslim sinners) a permitted thing."

At this point a discussion arose about the call of Moses. Maulana Karimuddin said: "Was Moses alone commanded to invite Pharaoh to the faith,[3] or did he have a companion?" He replied: "When Moses received the command, 'Go to Pharaoh and invite him,' this thought passed through his heart: 'I am alone, and Pharaoh has claimed divinity. Also, I killed a Copt in that city, and he is at enmity with me. In spite of this the command came, 'Go and invite him.' Thus it was that fear gripped the heart of Moses. Afterwards he petitioned that his brother Aaron might accompany him, as it is written in the Quran: 'And include him in My work' (Q 20:32). Thereupon Aaron was made his companion. Both set out. The command came: 'Be not afraid! I am with you both. I do hear and see' (Q 20:46)."

Afterwards he said: "It is mentioned here that Moses was afraid of Pharaoh. This is fear of someone other than God. The answer given is that this fear that Moses had of Pharaoh did not have him as its object but meant rather that he did not want the divine decree and commandment regarding himself to be accomplished at his hands. Thus this fear is also of God, not of Pharaoh. Every instance where fear of some other is mentioned can have this as an explanation."[4]

Sheikh Mu'izzuddin asked: "When he grew fearful could he be said to have remained agreeable?" He replied' "Yes, he spoke well when he said that the fear of God is not opposed to endeavouring to please Him, for a servant is bound to a particular thing at any one time. It is befitting that the existence of one should not oppose that of the other." Afterwards he added: "Pharaoh was a man who laid claim to divinity and Egypt, with all its territories, was under his sway. He harboured enmity in his heart towards Moses. This order came to him: 'Go to Pharaoh, for he has burst all bounds' (Q 20:24). He instructed him thus: 'Invite him in this fashion: 'Speak to him in a kindly manner' (Q 20:44). Don't be severe in your speech,' for one should speak politely with kings."

Maulana Karimuddin again said: "When he invited Pharaoh and he listened to what was said, did he respond to him sharply and with severity or not?" He replied: "No, he came to him and preached the message to him. He said: 'Produce arguments and signs for this.' After that Moses presented arguments and signs which proved convincing to him. When he became inclined towards the arguments and had accepted the accusation, at that moment he began to threaten him and intimidate him saying: 'You are a sorcerer and things are not as you say.' This is the manner of all foolish people."

Maulana Karimuddin again asked: "Apart from the miracle of the staff were there any other miracles?" He replied: "There were. Once it so happened that it rained frogs. For several days this continued. Thereupon the people gathered together and came to Moses. They said: 'O Moses, beseech your God to remove this torment from us and we shall believe in you.' After that torment was removed, through the intercession of Moses, they returned to their previous state. Once, instead of water, the river ran with blood. Again they gathered together and requested Moses once again to implore his God to remove that torment from them, promising to believe in Him. Once again, at the behest of Moses, the affliction was removed. Again they went back to their former state, saying: 'You are a sorcerer.' Thus it was that all the sorcerers of those regions were gathered together."

Afterwards he added: "In this verse, 'What do you have in your right hand, Moses?' (Q 20:17) it has been mentioned here that God Almighty was well aware of what was in Moses' hand. What then was the point of the question? This answer has been given: God questioned Moses in order to remove his fear. In other words, God Almighty wanted Moses to be honoured by His own word. At first he removed fear from him so that this might happen. He said: 'What is in your hand, O Moses?' Again he asked what the point was in specifying the right hand. Why didn't He simply say, 'What is in your hand?' By way of reply he has said that there was a ring in Moses' left hand. Thus if He had simply asked what was in his hand Moses would have been confused about how he should answer, wondering whether the question pertained to the ring or the

staff. That is why He said: 'What do you have in your right hand?' He has also given the answer that the right hand was mentioned on account of its special excellence. Afterwards Moses replied: 'He said: 'This is my staff: I recline on it and use it to beat the leaves to make them fall upon my sheep, and I have other uses for it' " (Q 20:18).

Again the question was posed: What was the point of Moses' saying 'it is my staff' and not simply 'a staff'? If he had simply said that it was a staff he would have answered the question. He replied: "When Moses joined the staff to himself it became apparent that it was lawful to attach things to oneself, such as 'This is my house; this is my horse;' and 'this is my property.' Again a question arises here: When Moses said, 'my staff' then the answer was complete so why did he go on and add: 'I recline on it and use it to beat the leaves?' What was the point of this? The answer is that Moses was delighted at being honoured with a word from God. In this joyful state he protracted his reply. Again this question was raised concerning 'And I have other uses for it.' Why didn't he give details here? Why did he pass over this in silence? The answer given is that he wanted to be asked by Him once more and be honoured by converse with God and so he said, 'And I have other uses for it.'

I am longing to be united with You,
Separated and apart from all.

Another answer is that when Moses was in a joyful mood he would answer at length, but when his mood changed to one of fear he said 'And I have other uses for it.' "

When I take Your name my tongue cannot contain You:
When I drink Your cup my mouth cannot hold You.

At this stage Sheikh Mu'izzuddin said: "Could it not also be that they consider that the question in each matter is concealed?" He replied: "In the *Tafsir-i Zāhid* (The Commentary of Zahid) one explanation is that the question in each thing is implied." Afterwards he said: "The order came to Moses: 'He said: 'Cast it down, O Moses! So he cast it down and lo! it was a squirming serpent' (Q 20:19-20), i.e. 'Throw down your staff!'

When he did so it became a fearful serpent, capable of swallowing the earth. Moses was frightened by it. He turned away to flee. A command came: 'He said: 'Take hold of it and fear not. We will restore it to its former state' (Q 20:21).

Here the question is raised as to how Moses could have been afraid of a snake, for this would be fear of something other than God, and such a state does not befit saints, let alone prophets. The answer is that the prophets are preserved from fear of anything other than God and the like, but not from something which is part and parcel of human nature. Now, fear is natural to man, being a necessary component of his humanity.[5] This is not blameworthy."

Afterwards he said, "In the Quran, God Almighty has described Moses' staff in several ways. He has described it once in this way: 'And lo! it was a squirming serpent' (Q 20:20). These three descriptions pertain to one thing in a particular situation. How can this be? It would be a contradiction. The reply proffered—which we hold in this matter—is that, on all three occasions one single visible form is referred to: once it is described as a serpent; once as a male serpent; and once as a demon."

Disturbances from those love-intoxicated eyes are no surprise:
Wherever a Turk gets drunk, there troubles arise.

Afterwards he went on thus: "What was the wisdom in God Almighty's turning the staff into a serpent in the holy valley and then showing it to Moses? The reply given is that God showed it to Moses so that, when the sorcerers of Pharaoh gathered together then, if he saw the staff turn into a serpent for the first time on that occasion he would have been afraid. Thus the staff was previously turned into a serpent so that he might see it and get frightened but, when he saw it again, he would not get frightened."

Afterwards he said: "On one occasion the sorcerers were all gathered together in Pharaoh's kingdom so that they might all be in the one spot. When they had brought seventy camel-loads of serpents, Pharaoh's sorcerers said to Moses, 'Will you throw down your staff first, or shall we?' Moses said, 'Do what you please.' So they unloaded the seventy camel-loads of

serpents first. At this fear gripped Moses' heart. Here it is also mentioned that this is fear of something other than God. The same answer is given—it is a natural fear. It is not harmful. Afterwards a command came to Moses: 'Now throw down your staff!' When he cast the staff from his hand it became a fearful serpent and, at one full swoop swallowed up all the serpents of Pharaoh's sorcerers. After observing this Pharaoh's socerers understood that this was not sorcery. They knew this because sorcery pertains to what is illusory: something appears to be what is not. The staff of Moses is just as it was. This is not sorcery.[6] Thus they became convinced of their own emptiness and the reality of Moses. They said: 'We believe in the Lord of Moses and Aaron' (Q22:70).

When she twists her billow of dishevelled curls
He is torn betwixt infidel desires and the beauty of faith.

Afterwards Pharaoh began to frighten them. 'You believe in him before I give you leave' (Q20:71). They answered him, 'Therefore decide what you are going to decide' (Q20:72). 'Command what you do and you cannot do but, concerning earthly life, you have no power to lengthen it. No harm: surely to our Lord we go back' (Q26:50). There is actually no loss when we have turned again towards our Lord.

Afterwards he said: "When anyone bitten by a snake is brought along then this verse should be recited and water breathed on three times and given to be drunk. It is necessary for a drop to enter the patient's gullet so that he might get better. The verse in question is this, 'He said, Cast it down, O Moses! So he cast it down, and lo! it was a squirming serpent' (Q20:19-20)." He said: "This verse pertains to Moses 'My Lord, surely I stand in need of whatever good Thou mayest send down to me' (Q28:24). By means of this petition he begged Almighty God for barley bread. It so happened that, when Moses arrived in Midian he grew hungry and, every time he felt hungry, he would be given bread and water so that he grew habituated to this. Thus on reaching Midian and growing hungry he said: 'O my Lord, I am in need of what You send to me,' i.e. bread and water. His prayer was heard with the result that he became the guest of the prophet Shu'aib. Thus it is that sages say that it became known that it is lawful to make one's

needs known to one's Lord. They do not find fault with this for, if it were not permissible but deserving of condemnation then Moses would not have said: 'My Lord, surely I stand in need of whatever good Thou mayest send down to me' (Q28: 24). So then, since he made his request, it is clear that it is permissible and that there is no blame attached to making known one's needs to one's Lord. Thus it is also understood that, if someone is well versed in interior matters it is incumbent upon him to make this known so that there may be an agreement between the internal and external. Don't you see that Moses was firmly convinced interiorly that God Almighty knew all about his hunger. Nevertheless he expressed his need verbally, yet there was no diminution. If there is not an interior sufficiency it is necessary to act exteriorly aided by interior favour."

Sheikh Mu'izzuddin said: "Here it should be asked why it is that so many dervishes did not make any request." He replied: "This is mentioned in that very place and the answer given is that, if there are groups that have not asked for things then it could be inferred that, since they had interior matters disclosed to them and they beheld what was revealed they did not have the power to speak out. There is a weakness within them which, if it were made manifest, would result in some interior harm and they would not be able to experience internal favour. Thus externalizing is correct for a person if there is no fault or imperfection for him in his internal condition. If they can preserve it and keep it in view, and if they are reckoned as men of stability then, for them, it is proper to make use of what is external, while preserving what is internal.[7] It is also mentioned that, when Moses arrived in Midian, there was a tree there. He was attracted by its shade. Here it is mentioned that, according to the sayings of some, everything that brings solace to the soul is forbidden. Thus, if it is unlawful to bring comfort to one's carnal soul, the fact that Moses, a prophet of God, sought the shade of a tree and made himself comfortable there makes us realize that it is not forbidden to bring comfort to one's soul by means of earthly delights.

Here it is asked why your ascetics don't think of their own comfort. My reply is that they are firmly convinced that this is not forbidden, but their reason for not seeking ease and comfort

is that it would mar their efforts at self-control and asceticism. This is why they restrain themselves, not that they consider them forbidden."[8]

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. The reference is to a tradition related by one person and handed down by one chain of narrators.
2. 'Tawātur'.
3. The missionary dimension of Islam is expressed by the word 'da'wah' (invitation). People are invited to embrace the faith. This is exemplified in the present narrative.
4. This is more an explanation of Sharafuddin's own interior state than of Moses' fear.
5. This whole chapter is very 'bookish' and probably reflects one aspect of the more formal, bookish discussions which also took place. In-so-far as they wander from man as their focus they lose the attention of the modern reader. It is refreshing, therefore, for him to come across such eminent good sense as is contained in this statement.
6. It is difficult to see any inherent logic in this line of argument.
7. This whole discussion is centered on the general need to keep a balance between the internal and the external.
8. These concluding remarks represent Sharafuddin's oft-expressed teaching. In addition to the clarity of principle there is a deftness of touch in his whole approach to asceticism which speaks volumes for his spiritual maturity.

Twenty-First Assembly

Maulana Karimuddin said: "When Gabriel was bringing the Quran to the Prophet, how many verses would he bring at a time?" The Venerable Master said: "It is related that five verses were brought at a time."

Again he asked: "Did a command issue forth from the Glorious Throne that five verses should be revealed to the Prophet at a time, or how did it happen?" He replied: "No, he would hear it in his own station and then bring it to the Prophet and reveal it to him."

Sheikh Mu'izzuddin asked: "On the Day of Judgement when the earth, together with its surface, no longer exists, will hell be raised up?" He replied: "Yes, it will be raised up. The wisdom of this is that the faithful will be enjoying the blessings of Paradise while the infidels will be burning in the tortures of hell. When those in hell see the faithful enjoying the comfort and blessings of Paradise their torment will become acute; while the faithful, on seeing the distress of the infidels, will rejoice. It is similar to enmity between two people, both of whom are on the point of drowning. The first of the two to drown, even if he precedes his companion by a single breath, will afford an opportunity for the second to rejoice, even though he himself is about to drown. That shows the extent of his rejoicing at the destruction of his enemy."

Later on he added: "Some have said that, on the Day of Judgement, just as the faithful will be granted the vision of God, so too will the infidels, but only once. After that they will be carried off to hell. Thus they will know what a blessing has been lost to them. The real point is that will be a marvel for the faithful but an increase in torment for the infidels."[1]

NOTE AND REFERENCE

1. This very human argument is a contradiction of the metaphysical argument adduced in the twenty-ninth assembly wherein Sharafuddin's real opinion is found, namely that the vision of God changes a person permanently. Here he is speaking more in a pastoral manner.

Twenty-Second Assembly

After breaking the fast[1] Sheikh Mu'izzuddin enquired: "The decision of a Qazi pertains to the external and internal forums, but what is meant by this word 'internal'?" The Venerable Master said: " 'External' refers to things as seen by men, whereas 'internal' refers to things as seen by God. It could be illustrated in this fashion. If a Qazi, on the testimony of two witnesses, issues an order which is contrary to what actually happened, that order of his is lawful both according to the external Law and in the sight of God so that, in the next life, the person concerned cannot be accused on account of that. For example, if a man claims he has married a particular woman but, in fact, they have not been married, yet he produces two witnesses and the Qazi, on the testimony of those two witnesses, issues a decree of validity of the marriage, then the situation is that, in the external forum there is a decree of validity. The matter stands established. All the external usages appear to be lawful. In the internal forum also, if an application is made to the decree to the Qazi then, in the sight of God, there would be nothing blameworthy."

Later on he added: "As for the Qazi, he simply issued his decree in accordance with the legal procedure in force. Afterwards, if something at variance with his decree comes to light, the Qazi has no authority to retract his decree. He accepts the testimony of the witnesses: he does not rescind his decree.

The following incident occurred during the lifetime of the Prophet. A man claimed that he had married a particular woman. Both appeared before the Prophet. The man made his claim while the woman denied it, affirming that she was not the man's wife at all. The man asserted that he had two witnesses. He promptly produced them before the Prophet. They also testified that the woman was married to the man. The Prophet decreed that his marriage was valid. After that the woman said:

'O Prophet, if things have turned out so then, O Prophet, give me in marriage to him.' The Prophet intoned, 'I bear witness to your marriage.' This tradition occurs in this context."

A discussion about the abrogation of Quranic verses arose. He said: "Some of them are those injunctions which have been abrogated but the reading of which remains.[2] For some, both the injunction and the reading have been abrogated as, for example, it is said the chapter on 'Women' was longer that that on 'The Cow'. Some of the companions, who had memorized the Quran, were reciting it. One night it so happened that their recitation reached the chapter on 'Women'. They read a portion of it and forgot the rest. No matter how hard they tried to recite it nothing at all came back to them. They were astonished and distressed, thinking 'What is happening? What has taken place? What misfortune has occurred for it to have fled our memories?' They waited the whole night, right up till dawn, so that, when dawn came, they might ask for an explanation from the Prophet. When dawn broke, they hurried off asked him why this had happened to them. The Apostle said: 'It was abrogated last night.' "

After that the Venerable Master said: "Glory be to God! When the reading was abrogated, its remembrance was removed from their minds."

Afterwards he said: "There is no abrogation is what is reasonable[3] neither in stories of historical accounts, nor in the foundations of the faith,[4] because what is reasonable in this era is so in others also. Moreover, if abrogation was permissible in stories and historical accounts then falsehood would necessarily enter in, for it would be incumbent upon the narrator to prove it so that what emanates from him might be found to be correct."

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. The presumption is that the fast of Ramzan is being referred to.
2. The whole question is that of the 'mansūkh' (abrogated) verses in the Quran which nevertheless remain in the text providing the observant reader with contradictory statements. For a list of such verses, as well as the 'nāsikh' (abrogating) ones, cf. Hughes, *Dictionary of Islam*, p. 520.
3. 'Ma'qūlāt'.
4. 'Usūl-i Dīn'

Twenty-Third Assembly

A discussion arose about the serious sin committed by the brothers of the Prophet Joseph. The Venerable Master said: "Their sin was committed before the manifestation of their prophethood, and it is said that prophets are not preserved from serious sin before prophetic revelation occurs. It is possible for them to commit a serious sin, but only rarely, and linked to repentance."

Afterwards he added: "The brothers of the Prophet Joseph, before executing their nefarious designs upon him, were saying: 'We shall repent this.' Thus, before they fell into grave sin they had readied themselves for repentance, as it is written in the chapter on Joseph: 'And after that you may be righteous men' (Q12:9). O repentant ones, Imam Zahid has written in connection with this verse that one should not sin but, if it unexpectedly happens some time—as happened to Joseph's brothers—remember that, even before they had fallen into sin they already intended to repent." Later on the Venerable Master exclaimed several times, "How well this has been expressed in this commentary that one should not sin but, if one occasionally does so unexpectedly, then one should act as they did."[1]

After that he said: "The prophets are not preserved from sins before their prophethood is manifested, so sin is possible, but linked to repentance. After becoming prophets they are preserved from all disobedience. Moreover they are preserved from idolatry[2] at all times, and they are always mystic knowers of the Lord, for it has been related that they are knowers while yet in their mothers' wombs, through divine inspiration and, after being born, they are knowers through the use of their intellects."

The Helpless One asked, "Immediately after being born?" He replied, "Yes, immediately after birth."

Afterwards he added: "When Joseph's brothers travelled from Can'aan to Egypt they were brought into the presence of Joseph. At that point Joseph's brothers had not recognized him. Joseph enquired if they also had another brother. They answered that they did, one called Joseph, but a wolf had devoured him and their father had become blind as a result of his loss. He then said that he had heard that they had a brother who attacked lions, catching hold of them and ripping their jaws apart. They replied that it was true. Again he said that he had heard that they had another brother who, when he shouted outside the city, the fear inspired by his cry was so great that the pregnant women in the city immediately gave birth. They acknowledged that they had such a brother. Thereupon Joseph mockingly exclaimed: 'How astonishing! How could a wolf carry off anybody from the midst of such brothers.' "

When the Venerable Master reached this point he smiled broadly.[3] He then added: "When Joseph revealed himself to them, all hung their heads in fear and shame. They were afraid lest he utilize his royal power to wreak revenge on them and they were ashamed of what they had done to him. In spite of this Joseph forgave them and made no mention at all about it. He gave no hint about seeking retribution, saying 'There shall be no reproof against you this day; God may forgive you, for He is the most merciful of the merciful' (Q12: 92). The learned here say that if anyone has done anything bad or oppressive to anybody else he should come to forgiveness and not punish him. He should not advance towards retribution, just as the prophet Joseph acted towards his brothers. He even prayed for them, 'May God forgive you' (Q12: 92). When his father and brothers came to Joseph in Egypt, Joseph met the prophet Jacob after an interval of forty years. He mentioned nothing about the cruelties of his brothers—their selling him and throwing him into a well.[4] He said: 'O my father, this is the significance of my vision of old; my Lord has indeed made it to be true: and He was indeed kind to me when He brought me forth from the prison and brought you from the desert after the Devil had sown dissensions between me and my brothers' (Q12:100). He said: 'This is the interpretation of the dream which I had that God Almighty had acted well with me. He brought me out of prison.'

So many afflictions befell the prophet Joseph yet he prefer-

red to think of what was good. The learned here add that, if evils befall someone, he should remember, as did Joseph, what is good in preference to them."

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. Sinning unexpectedly is one thing, while an intention to repent after committing a deliberate, grave sin hightens, rather than mitigates its malice, being incompatible with genuine repentance.
2. 'Shirk'.
3. 'Tabassum-i balīgh kard'.
4. The actual order of events is reversed in this statement.

Twenty-Fourth Assembly

A discussion arose about the descendants of Muhammad. The Helpless One asked: "Is 'Honour my children who are good, for God's sake, but not the evil, for my sake,' a tradition of the Prophet, and have you noticed it in collections of Traditions?" The Venerable Master replied: "It has not come to my attention in collections of Traditions, but it is said to be a traditions."

Again the Helpless One enquired: "Was Yazid among the descendants of the Prophet?" He replied: "He was a descendant of the companions of the Prophet, being the son of Mu'awiya."

Again he asked: "What is meant by saying that Yazid should not be cursed?" He replied: "The reason is that an inferior should not curse anyone who is superior to him. Yazid was one of the companions—or at least one of the succeeding generation. Hence, it is not proper. Again, it is related that the Prophet said: 'I had requested pardon of God for whatever has transpired among my companions.' Hence, they have been forgiven.[1] For this reason also Yazid should not be cursed. Again, it could have happened that Yazid himself became repentant after his opposition. Thus, since he could have repented, curses and imprecations should not be directed against him. We should be content to say, 'We are lovers of those who love the Prophet's family and at enmity with its enemies.' This is a good compromise."[2]

At this stage the conversation turned to Yazid's enmity towards the Commander of the Faithful, Husain. He said: "Just as there was enmity between the fathers so too it arose between the sons. Firstly, Mu'awiya separated himself from the Commander of the Faithful, Ali. After Ali's death Yazid, Mu'awiya's son, showed his animosity towards the Commander of the Faithful, Husain."

Afterwards he related this story: "When Mu'awiya died Yazid became the chief man and was extracting an oath of allegiance from each person. Everybody was coming to him and pledging fealty to him. At last the turn of the Commander of the Faithful, Husain, came. A person was sent to him in order to secure his oath. He disclosed two or three things to him saying, 'Anyone who has these two or three things is not fit for leadership. I do not find them in you, nor shall I act against the Law. If, however, your enmity towards me is on account of Medina, then I shall leave Medina.' He left Medina and went to Mecca. Yazid came to Medina, along with his army. Husain said: 'Since he has come to Medina, he will want Mecca as well.' Thus he left Mecca and headed towards Kufa. Yazid sent messages to Kufa ordering the capture of the Commander of the Faithful. Afterwards he ordered the closure of the roads to Kufa via the desert of Karbala. He planned to go on to Syria. The desert of Karbala was close to Kufa. After he reached it, the very army of Yazid appeared in front of him. In that same place he was killed."[3]

The Helpless One asked: "Where does the name 'Karbala' come from?" He said: "The name of the desert was 'Karbala'. In that country each desert has its own distinctive name." Afterwards he related this story: "It is related that the mother of the Faithful, 'Aisha, along with two of the 'ten who received good news',[4] had gone to Mu'awiya. The orthodox scholars of the Muslim community say here that, if the Mother of the Faithful, 'Aisha, and the two companions[5] from the 'ten' who had gone to Mu'awiya, then—God protect me—it cannot be said that they had abandoned the real leader (i.e. Ali) and befriended the victorious one (i.e. Mu'awiya). Rather, they had gone for the sake of peace, trying to establish peace between the two of them."

Afterwards he said: "That was the first occasion on which the sword passed through the midst of Muslims."[6]

Some of those present in the assembly cried out in amazement, 'Did such a thing come from Mu'awiya, who was a recorder of the Revelation and one of the most generous of the companions?" The Venerable Master—may God exalt him—at

this point said: "From the very beginning a command was issued that so many things were to come into existence through him. It could never have been otherwise."[7]

Afterwards he added: "In some places it is written that, because Mu'awiya used the sword against Ali, a third of the commands of Islam have benefited from this. For example, the commands about rebellion, booty and the slain. What is the command about rebels and about the slain followers of the true leader, and the Friday gathering, and the sermon and the things which are fittingly connected with them so that it can be said that a third of the commands of Islam benefited therefrom? Now, in one sin of his, behold! the secret of this must be that God knows what the secrets are."

Every good or evil action which occurs,
Upon inspection, yields guidance for the future.

Afterwards he said: "It has been related that one day the Commanders of the Faithful, Hasan and Ḥusain, were playing in front of the Apostle. He grew very happy. At that moment Gabriel descended and said: 'How can you be happy when it has been decreed that one will be given poison and the other will be killed in the desert of Karbala?"

Your life cannot be saved from this end, O Sa'di:
You are a thirsty traveller, and are offered poisoned sherbet.

Later on he said: "It is said that Yazid wanted a pledge of allegiance but those who went to do battle with him killed him of their own accord, for Yazid executed those who had killed Husain."[8]

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. Sharafuddin does not doubt for a minute the efficacy of Muhammad's prayers of intercession.
2. The non-Muslim reader should be aware that this whole assembly deals with material which can be very painful for Muslims. All would not agree with Sharafuddin's views, nor with his narration of events.
3. The slaying of Husain and his family and close followers in 680 A.D. is recalled with grief by Shi'ahs for the first ten days of Muharram each year.

4. These ten had been promised that they would go to Paradise.

5. Zubair and Talḥa.

6. Previous to the armed conflict between Ali and Mu'awiya in 657 A.D. was that between Ali and 'Aisha, supported by Zubair and Talḥa, in 656. Ali won the first and was winning in the second when Mu'awiya employed a stratagem which shifted the struggle from the battle-field to arbitration.

7. Sharafuddin is not shy about resorting to what, for him, is the ultimate answer to everything—the divine decree!

8. Sharafuddin's ironic approach to the whole discussion should be noted. It fits in with his teaching about the need to forgive all, even one's enemies.

Twenty-Fifth Assembly

A discussion arose about the will of God[1] and intention.[2] The Venerable Master said: "In *'Iṣmat-ul-Anbiyā* (The Sinlessness of the Prophets) it is mentioned that the 'will of God' and 'intention' are one and the same. 'Whatever he obtains by intention results in his being overtaken by other-than-God; whereas whatever he obtains by the will of God produces nothing but God in him.' A distinction has been made to this extent and it has been said that the fear of the prophets and the saints consists in this: whatever is in the will of God is not known to anybody except God—not to any angel, the heavenly tablet, nor the pen. What the pen is commanded to do is write that so and so, the son of so and so is fortunate; whereas so and so, the son of so and so, is wretched, as God wills. All of this is found in the above-mentioned *'Iṣmat-ul-Anbiyā*. Whatever the pen is commanded to write on the tablet is done so in this manner. From the point of view of investigation, although the pen writes, it is ignorant of what is within the divine will, as is also the tablet upon which it writes."

One particle from your infidel locks
Is like the raid of a hundred thousand horses.

In the meantime Husamuddin, the prayer-leader of Haibat Khan, said: "Tonight is the *Shab-i Barāt* (the Night of Decisions).[3] The angels are informed about everything that is to take place in the coming year, all of which is to be put into effect. For example, the Angel of Death is informed that so and so, on Sunday, after the midday prayer, will leave the abode of what is transitory for that which is everlasting."[4] The Venerable Master said: "He is also informed, in this way, that so and so, on Sunday, will leave the world, if God so wills. In this also the will of God is hidden."

He enquired: "When, on Sunday, he died, was the Angel of Death informed that this was the will of God?" He replied: "Once death has occurred, the will of God is known, but this was not previously known. Also, 'Our speech is before the existence of things.' Concerning whatever God Almighty gives notice is going to be put into effect and has been made dependent on His own will, the Angel of Death knows no more than that God Almighty has given information about it and that it is bound to His own will. He does not know absolutely that it will happen, but what he makes known is done so only after it has come into existence. Before that he simply says that it will happen but he does not have knowledge of what lies in the inscrutable will of God. Also, for the reason that, in our religion, an exception in receiving something in faith is held as permissible. In other words, if a believer says, 'I am a believer—God willing.' It is permissible to hold this with regard to attaining what one desires. With regard to the present and past, however, how can faith be present? He has indisputable knowledge that he is a believer. There cannot be any doubt about that, for it is known. It can, however, be present in actions which are just about to happen: will it happen or not? There is room for doubt in this situation. This can happen only when a person is not absolutely certain, e.g. about a good end—that depends on how he accepts things. A person is not informed therein whether he will be faithful till the end or not. It is permissible to have a doubt in this situation.

When you let your hair down coquetishly
A hundred disasters befell the world thereby.

Imam Shafi'i,[5] however, holds that it is permissible to have recourse to God's will about the present. He does not hold that there is any wavering or doubt. He says that no wavering or doubt—by the will of God—is found in his own faith. That is why he holds it as permissible from now till then,[6] but adds that an action of the present or the past is just as it was in reality. By saying, 'If God wills' with respect to that action he behaves well because it is fitting for him to entrust it to the will of God and to remove himself from the action,[7] even though, at the present moment, there is no doubt or hesitancy in his own faith. Instead, he has certain knowledge concerning

it, but what is fitting is for use to put our trust in the will of God. As proof, he adduces the following verse. When the Apostle was in Medina, before his victory over Mecca, he saw in a dream that he had already conquered Mecca and had entered it. Now the dream of a prophet is revelation.[8] There is no hesitation or doubt in it, nor is a fabrication at all possible. It is as though they have seen for themselves. In this regard God Almighty in His own noble speech has also mentioned that 'You shall most certainly enter the sacred mosque in safety if God so wills' (Q 48:27). If He had given this amount of information, 'You shall enter', it would have been sufficient for the news was of an event which would undoubtedly take place. For these reasons no untruth or opposition is allowable therein: the thing will take place. In addition to this God Almighty has given fitting instruction. In this interpretation He has said, 'You shall most certainly enter the sacred mosque in safety if God so wills'. Hence it is known that, in each thing which has come into existence through a person it is fitting to attribute it to the will of God. This is the proof adduced by Imam Shafi'i.

Our own theologians, however, give this reply: What is tentative in the verse quoted above is not what is connected with the words 'you shall enter' but with 'in safety' because the promise does not pertain to their entering safely or fearfully but simply to their entering. Of what use is it to say, 'If God wills?'[9] In matters where there is no promise or information, however, it would be better to refer it to the will of the Maker."

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. 'Mashiyat'.
2. 'Irādat' i.e. the intention of the disciple.
3. The night of 15th Sha'ban. The text itself indicates the import of the feast.
4. The terms are the familiar 'fanā' and 'baqā'.
5. Imam Shafi'i was the founder of one of the schools of Islamic Law named after him. He died in Cairo in 820.
6. 'Fil ḥāl tā az ān jā', i.e. from now till the Day of Judgement.

7. Imam Shafi'i is putting more emphasis on the will of God than on the reality itself—a position fraught with danger!
8. 'Waḥy'.
9. In outlining a different, more rational position, Sharafuddin shows here, as elsewhere, that he had his own conceptual framework. By referring to ' 'ulamā-i mā' he indicates that he was not alone in his opinion, which involves a criticism of that of Imam Shafi'i.

Twenty-Sixth Assembly

It was after the evening prayer that he was seen. The Helpless One said: "What is the command concerning a work about which conditions of acceptability are not explicitly stated?"[1] The Venerable Master replied: "It is like scattered particles of dust.[2] There is no recompense for it because, from the point of view of the Law, it is beyond what is obligatory, even though the conditions are permissible ones."[3]

Again he asked: "Will a person be held responsible in the next life for abandoning the conditions of acceptability?" He replied, "No."

In the meantime, Sheikh Mu'izzuddin asked: "Will this be so because nothing is commanded with respect to it?" He replied: "Yes."[4]

Again he asked: "If someone considers the conditions of acceptability as necessary, will he be held responsible for a defect?" He replied: "That's what piety is.[5] After a person considers something as a necessity it would become so. From the exigencies of his spiritual condition it becomes a duty of his particular state. As far as possible he carries it out. If he does not do what he is capable of doing he will be held responsible for not doing so."[6]

The Helpless One enquired: "Is there also some condition of acceptability in faith as in works?" He said: "The condition of acceptability with regard to faith is this: before giving up, it is necessary that it should be."

At this stage a discussion arose concerning 'gifted' and 'transient' faith.[7] The Helpless One asked: "Is there a sign for everybody by which they can recognize that this faith is gifted while that is transient?" He replied: "Yes, there is. One sign is this: he knows the extent of the blessing of the faith and

what stems from its origins. By means of that he finds divine guidance and carries out its demands. If he finds this within himself he will recognize that it is a gift. The mystics perceive everything by means of the properties of that very thing. Everything has something special upon which the gaze of the mystics falls and by means of which they perceive that one quality which is required of a spiritual guide is the ability to grasp what will eventuate i.e. if a person is destined for felicity or hostility.[8] If he belongs to the former category, he accepts him and bestows the honour of discipleship upon him. If he is in the latter one he rejects him. He will not accept him because nobody can accept a person who, from all eternity, has been rejected."

After some time he himself presented a difficulty: "The prophets knew the qualities of things. Granted that, how could they invite everybody to embrace Islam?" He himself proffered an answer: "Although the prophets knew those qualities, their invitation provided grounds to censure them. It does not mean that someone condemned from eternity would be accepted."

Afterwards he said: " 'Ain ul-Quzat has spoken very well about the deprivation of faith and has himself given a reply. His question is this: 'Faith is a gift of God and the deprivation of faith is the rescinding of a gift. Such an action ill befits generosity. How can this be explained?' His reply is that there is no rescinding of a gift: the person has not recognized the value of the gift of faith, nor is he acquainted with its origins. In this sense the gift is rendered ineffectual. Thus it needs to be understood that the gift is rendered ineffectual by the person, not that God takes back His gift." The Venerable Master, upon reaching these words, repeated several times approvingly, "It is a good answer, in the sense that the fault is attributed to the person involved."[9]

In the meantime the Helpless One asked: "How can we talk about the 'deprivation of faith' whenever a person rejects this gift?" He replied: "The deprivation of faith results from its having beeen rejected, not from the taking back of a gift." Afterwards he said: "In the *Tamhīdāt* (Dispositions)[10] it is stated in one place that Moses provides us with a proof of the

permissibility of the vision of God because, if it were prohibited, the question of its lawfulness would not have arisen. Hence it must be considered as lawful. Since this is so, what is the meaning of 'I beg Your pardon' which emanated from Moses? He gave this reply: It is ingrained in human nature that, when somebody sees an impending disaster, he turns towards repentance. Thus when Moses saw the shattering of the mountain he witnessed an awe-inspiring spectacle. That is why Moses said, 'I beg Your pardon', not because he had asked to see God and that was not permissible."

The Venerable Master said: "It has been stated clearly."[11]

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. This is a discussion of the conditions of a spiritual 'state' which lies beyond the pale of the Law.
2. In other words, don't expect any return in terms of merit, just as one cannot expect fine particles of dust, scattered by the wind, to return.
3. The 'conditions' referred to are those which the Law would enumerate as being essential for the proper performance of any duty, e.g. ritual prayer.
4. Sharafuddin never belittles the Law, but neither is he fetted to it.
5. 'Piety' is an attempt to translate 'taqwā' which really means 'holding God in respectful awe.'
6. Sharafuddin knows, from experience, the exigencies of love. They cannot be denied without even greater suffering ensuing. It is, however, a free realm, beyond the Law with its merit and punishment.
7. 'Imān-i 'aṭā'ī wa 'ārīyatī'. 'Gifted' faith is really a mystical grace, as is clear from what follows; whereas 'transient' or 'borrowed' faith refers to the fallible faith of ordinary people.
8. 'ahl-i sa'ādat ya ahl-i shiqāwat'.
9. There is no room in Sharafuddin's scheme for any defect in God.
10. A work on mysticism produced by 'Ain ul-Quzat in 1127.
11. Sharafuddin's own position is outlined in the twenty-ninth assembly.

Twenty-Seventh Assembly

Sheikh Zada Uchcha[1] was present. He said: "The Apostle is greater than all the other prophets. Hence what is the meaning of: 'O God, bless Muhammad as You have blessed Abraham!' The comparison is made with Abraham. A comparison should be with someone superior." The Venerable Master said: "The meaning is this: 'O God, bless Muhammad in his stage and degree to the extent that You blessed Abraham in his stage and degree.' The comparison is with the essence of compassion,[2] not with the soul of the deceased.[3] The intention is that, to the extent and degree that Abraham had been shown mercy, to the very same extent and degree Muhammad should also be granted mercy. Thus there is no harm as far as excellence is concerned."

Sheikh Mu'izzuddin said: "All the prophets were especially graced by the divine mercy. What is the point of the comparison with Abraham?" He replied: "Because Abraham was the prophet who had attained the stage of friendship with God,[4] while our prophet had attained that of love and, as far as meaning is concerned, friendship and love are one and the same. Hence the comparison is more apt with him than with others—though God knows best!"

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. Uchch is a town in modern Pakistan south-east of the confluence of the Sutlej and Chenab rivers.
2. i.e. God, the Merciful and Compassionate.
3. 'Dar nafs-i raḥmat ast na dar nafs-i marḥūm'. The 'deceased' is Abraham.
4. Abraham is called 'Khal-lullah'—'The Friend of God'.

Twenty-Eighth Assembly

During the breaking of the fast a discussion arose about some people to the effect that, when they have acquired knowledge, they feel ashamed of their fathers and, out of shame, are unwilling to mention their fathers' names openly. The Venerable Master said: "Malik-i Dinar[1] was such an outstanding Sufi as to be the head of an order. He was not ashamed of his father. He called himself, 'Malik-i Dinar'. He had so many disciples and followers as to know no limit. It is related that, one day, Malik-i Dinar was walking along the road. A Sayyid came forward and greeted him. He caught hold of the hand of Malik-i Dinar and said: 'You must be the son of a slave. You enjoy such pomp and state while I am a descendant of the daughter of the Apostle of God, yet look at my condition!' Malik-i Dinar replied: 'I have carried out the command of your ancestor and been blessed with this wealth. You, however, did not do so and have been reduced to this condition.' Afterwards, when nightfall came, it so happened that Malik-i Dinar saw the Apostle in a dream. He was chiding him: 'O Malik-i Dinar, you have found fault with my descendant.' Afterwards Malik-i Dinar repented of having done so."

When the Venerable Master reached these words he said: "Wherever there is excellence in lineage—as, for example, the descendants of the Apostle and those of the sheikhs—outstanding knowledge is not a necessary condition for praise so that one praises only the person who possesses it. If such a person possesses knowledge, then that would be one excellence heaped upon another."

The Helpless One enquired: "Would this dream of Malik-i Dinar serve as a proof of the correctness of the following tradition: 'Honour my children who are good for God's sake, but not the evil, for my sake.' " He replied: "Yes, but God knows best."

NOTE AND REFERENCE

1. The name is given in its Persian form and means, 'Master of the Dinar' according to the legend given by Attar. In India the sign of the genitive is usually dropped where proper names are concerned. This is the normal practice in this translation.

Twenty-Ninth Assembly

A discussion about the holiness of the saints arose. The Venerable Master said: "Every saint has his own territorial limits. This applies in the spiritual domain just as it does to kings in the visible world. Each one exercises power within his own territory and his commands are heeded therein. He is able to do whatever he wants to therein, but can exercise no power in another's territory, just as kings have territorial boundaries beyond which they are not allowed to rule. If he tries to exercise control over a village in the territory of somebody else his commands will not be obeyed. The very same situation applies to the saints in the spiritual domain."

A discussion arose about displaying miracles. Some holy men displayed miracles. The Venerable Master said: "It is not permissible to make a display of them. Concealment is obligatory. How can they consider it lawful for themselves to abandon something obligatory? It is mentioned, however, in different places, that it was done in the heat of the moment; or in an ecstatic condition; or as an inducement for disciples. There is no fourth category.

There is a secret between You and me no one else knows:
Even if I lose my head, I'll reveal it to no other.

Apart from this, however, if somebody has related something about a holy man which is beyond the regulations and principles of the faith it should be known that it does not emanate from the holy man. Foolish disciples have written something on their own initiative and foisted it in the holy man."[1]

The Helpless One said: "What is the point of the responsibility of concealing miracles?" He replied: "There is no obligation to believe in them which would necessitate the

performance of miracles in order to establish the correctness of their claim, as is the case with prophets. These have to perform miracles proper to prophets in order to establish the correctness of their claim. Moreover, if saintly people make a show of miraculous power they succumb to fame and bear the burden of any consequent disturbance that arises. It can also happen that they become proud."

The Helpless One asked again: "Don't they have the power of protecting themselves from pride?" He replied: "In spite of this it is possible for them to fall into pride because sinlessness has not been granted to them." The Helpless One again enquired: "Do they perform miracles in order to attract disciples?" He replied: "This has been related but, if they are trustworthy men and the calamities and dangers said to be inherent in them do not affect them, then it would be all right. This is recorded in books and this very thing has been mentioned in various places."

At this stage a discussion arose about how a saint could recognize his own sainthood. He said: "This is a disputed question. Some say they do not know; some say they do. Those who hold that they do not know argue that such knowledge would result in assurance about their final end and that is not proper, for faith should oscillate between fear and hope, and that balance would be destroyed. Hence they do not have that knowledge. Those who assert that they do know say that, although that assurance would come along with the recognition of their sainthood, nevertheless it would not lead to any diminution in their faith, as is exemplified in the ten blessed ones to whom the Prophet announced the felicity of being destined for Paradise. By means of this news they felt at peace, for it would be infidelity to doubt anything proclaimed by the Lord of the Law. Nevertheless, there was no diminution in their religious practice."

When the Venerable Master reached these words he himself posed this difficulty: "The news about the ten came through revelation but, with respect to a saint, what can be said, for revelation terminated with the Prophet?" He himself also replied: "The answer given is that, although revelation has terminated, Tradition remains, namely inspiration has taken

its place. Hence it is through inspiration that they know. This, however, does not enjoy the same certainty, because one can go on to ask how they know that their inspiration is divine and not satanic? The answer given is that they know through mystical illumination and their sanctity. They can discern that this is divine and this is satanic. Nevertheless, they cannot be absolutely sure because the light of their sanctity and mystical illumination does not carry them entirely beyond doubt and deception so as to become absolutely certain. Whoever comes to know does so by means of signs and indications. Thus nothing can be proved absolutely, for doubt and deception always remain, since signs and indications can never emerge from doubt and deception and result in certainty."

The Helpless One said: "Let us imagine that somebody has seen the Prophet in a dream and that he told him that he was a saint, and that there was no scope for satanic deception in this instance. Since the Prophet is a truthful messenger it is not proper to contradict what he has said. In this situation absolute certainty is fitting." He replied: "Although there is no satanic deception and he has really seen the Prophet, absolute certainty is not attained for it could happen that, while listening, he thinks and imagines he is listening to the Prophet but what he heard was not from the Prophet. He thinks it is but Satan has caused him to hear it. This in fact happened to the Prophet himself. The commentaries relate how, in the chapter on 'The Star' it so happened that the Prophet was reciting this chapter one day in the company of his companions. There was also a group of inimical people and those who rejected him present there. Satan had also slipped in and sat down without anybody spotting him. The Prophet reached the verse, 'Have you thought about al-Lat, al-'Uzza and Manat the third' (Q 53:20)? His blessed breath was cut off at this point so that he had to go back to the beginning of the verse. At this juncture Satan, in the very same voice and pitch recited, 'Those idols are so great that one can rely on the power of their intercession.' The infidels presumed that the Prophet had recited the words. They all clapped their hands and said: 'Muhammad has confirmed the intecessory power of our idols!'

The Prophet asked his companions if he had said any such thing. They said, 'Yes, O Apostle of God.' The Prophet got very angry, as did all of his companions. This story, however, is very long. If anyone wants to see it in detail he can look at a commentary. Here one also encounters many intricate discussions."

The Helpless One said: "From this event there is a clear need to establish whether something is from Satan or from the blessed tongue of the Apostle of Islam so that certainty can be obtained." He replied: "In fact this can be ordained, but how can the person who has the dream know for certain, with regard to himself, even if it so happens that he hears something from the blessed tongue of the Apostle? Upon investigation it may happen there is room for doubt and deception. Some reason for fear remains, and certainty is not attained.[2] It can come only when there is no vestige of doubt or deception."

Again the Helpless One said: "If anyone sees God in a dream he should know with certainty that he has seen Him, for a person who has such a dream must be a happy person, not a wretched one, for wretchedness would ill befit him." He replied: "Even there, one cannot be certain, because the person who thinks he has seen God in a dream does so on account of signs and indications. One way of discriminating is explained by this group by means of the distinction between the manifestation of the soul and that of God.[3] In the former—in other words, when the soul shines forth—a sign and indication of something created and strange is found in it. They should know that this is the manifestation of the soul. On the other hand, in divine manifestation, while there may be new, created signs and indications, and although it may seem that they are created and new, since they find something created and new therein, and they understand that no such thing can be found or seen in the Creator, nevertheless they understand and realize that divine manifestation has occurred.[4] To the extent that he can understand that this is divine manifestation, this will be the result of signs and indications. That is why absolute certainty is not attained."

Afterwards he opened his blessed lips and said: "Thus it is

that, because there is still room for fear, absolute certainty is not attained."

Tajuddin, the son of Khwaja Mahmud Iwaz's brother, asked if anybody had seen God Almighty in a dream. He replied: "Khwaja Ahmad Hanbal[5] is reported to have seen God a thousand times in dreams. How can you ask if anybody has seen Him?"

I consider a night apart from You as good as the tomb:
And if I reach the dawn without You, it must be Judgement Day.

And again:

The foolish come to Judgement Day seeking pleasure and gaiety:
The wise don't exchange cash in hand for promises.

Afterwards he said: "This is a disputed question. Some say that there is no question of seeing God in a dream, while others contend that there is."

Again he enquired: "Can anyone see God in this world during his waking state?" He replied: "Nobody is of this opinion." Afterwards he said: "The reason why there is no vision of God in this world is that after the vision one attains an eternal state. There can be no transitoriness therein, but the world and all that it contains is transitory. If there were vision in this world there would be no transitoriness, only what is eternal. How could this be correct, however, since both the Quran and Tradition are destined to pass away."[6]

Afterwards he said: "I had heard this in Bengal from Amir Fazil Balkhi. The Balkhis are noted exegetes and traditionists. They are particularly good at exegesis. Once Amir Fazil Balkhi was expounding a commentary from the pulpit. When he reached the verse about the vision of God, this very question—as to whether God can be seen in this world or not—arose. He said He could not be seen, for the reason that the world is the abode of what is transitory while, after the vision of God, there is everlastingness. There can be no passing-away therein. Everything in this world will pass away. Thus there is no vision, even though God can be seen."

There is no thinking or turning away:
If the beloved is sad, we are entrapped.

It so happened that I boasted of my union with You:
Now there is only me and, behind my hands, a wall.

Again the Helpless One said: "In Bulghar[7] it is said that there is no night prayer. There is sunset and sunrise.[8] What are they obliged to do?" He replied: "The inhabitants of that city sought a legal decision on the matter, sending their request to Bukhara. All the religious scholars of Bukhara gathered together. They said: 'Five prayers are obligatory each day. How could they only say four?' In this fashion they discussed the matter among themselves. At last they agreed on this: Although five prayers are obligatory, nevertheless the obligation depends on time. This, in fact, is not present. Hence the prayer also is not obligatory."

The Helpless One enquired if it were true that such a city existed. He replied: "Yes, for it is also mentioned in the commentaries."[9]

The Helpless One asked: "If someone is engaged in seclusion and practises some trade would it be allowable for him to remain occupied with that trade for the sake of securing his living?" The Venerable Master replied: "It is not allowable to practise a trade in the mosque, by analogy with buying and selling, which is also not allowed in a mosque. For one in seclusion, however, according to the exigencies of his seclusion, and provided goods are not actually present, it has been allowed. Hence, for one in seclusion, being occupied with buying and trading, according to the needs of his seclusion, is allowable, but only insofar as it is necessary, just as eating and drinking in a mosque is forbidden, but is allowed for one in seclusion. Then there is no prohibition. In an analogous way, a person in seclusion should be allowed to practise his trade."

Again he enquired if seclusion was based on a confirmed prophetic tradition so that a person who broke it would be blameworthy. He replied: "There is a sound prophetic tradition for the last ten days of the month of Ramzan." Afterwards

he said: "Blame presupposes a duty which is enjoined, but a confirmed prophetic tradition is close to being enjoined. Abandoning a simple prophetic tradition is reprehensible, while abandoning a sound one calls for more than a rebuke but is still not punishable."

In the meantime Khwaja Zahiruddin said that Maulana Wahiduddin used to spend the last ten days of each Ramzan in seclusion. He used to say: "When I went to Sheikh Nizam-uddin[10] and became a disciple of his and explained my religious practices to him, I also mentioned that each year I spent the last ten days of Ramzan in seclusion. The Sheikh said: 'Maulana, among my companions there is no one who does so.' Again I explained that it had become an annual practice for me. Thereupon the Sheikh said: 'Then let it be.' "

At this stage he put his question: "Since the tradition in question is a confirmed one, the Sheikh's answer is an important denial of consent. What could this mean?" The Venerable Master replied: "It could be that the Sheikh saw some danger or calamity in the practice and that is why he did not enjoin it. Besides, there are so many important duties which are obligatory and which have to be performed. A tradition has its own standing. It is in the category of what is not obligatory and, when it comes to observance, what is more important takes precedence."[11]

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. This is an extremely important statement and should always be borne in mind when reading hagiography. Sharafuddin himself is not slow to criticize statements which he finds nonsensical.

2. Anybody acquainted with the whole gamut of deception which is possible in the spiritual life will undoubtedly be impressed by Sharafuddin's circumspection.

3. 'Kashf-i rūḥi wa kashf-i ilāhi' in the Persian. Sharafuddin's classic exposition of this very important distinction is found in *The Hundred Letters*, Letter 14, 'Manifestation', pp. 62-3.

4. In both types of manifestation there is question of something new and thus created, but the latter type of manifestation—i.e. divine—is accompanied by an awareness that it comes from God, but is not

God; while, in the former, there is a tendency simply to label it 'divine', which it certainly is not, as he explains in the place cited.

5. Ahmad Hanbal (d. 855 A.D.) was founder of one of the four schools of orthodox Islam. Sharafuddin's teacher, Maulana Tau'ama, was a Hanbalite.

6. 'Bar fāṇī shudan āmadé ast'. This is Sharafuddin's position on the possibility of seeing God in this life. The concept of 'seeing God' is ambiguous and its meaning has to be culled from the particular context in which it occurs. Here it is meant strictly, i.e. seeing God as He is in himself. The reader should observe that the argument here adduced—which he confesses originated from Amir Fazil Balkhi—is a metaphysical one based on the nature of 'fanā' and 'baqā'.

7. 'Bulghār'.

8. 'Ghurūb ast wa ṭulū' '. The reference is to the peculiarities of arctic conditions.

9. In A a new assembly begins here. We follow the printed version.

10. Presumably Sheikh Nizamuddin Auliya (d. 1325) is being referred to.

11. Two important points emerge from this discussion: there is a hierarchy in obligatory duties; and different Sufi masters can have diametrically opposed views on certain, not strictly enjoined practices. This is important for unenlightened disciples have a tendency to absolutize practices which are essentially relative and, in consequence, essentially free.

Thirtieth Assembly

Sheikh Mu'izzuddin asked if meditation was more excellent than all other forms of voluntary worship. Did that mean it was superior to voluntary, extra ritual prayer? If this is so, how could it be for, in such prayer, meditation is also included." The Venerable Master replied: "In ritual prayer meditation is incidental, while our discussion is about meditation in itself."

Again he said: "Ritual prayer embraces so many fundamentals of the faith and includes so many activities such as fixing one's prayerful attention on God, reciting the Quran and praising and glorifying God. There should be an equality. How can you speak of superiority?" He replied: "The object of worship is not the worship itself but rather it is the effect and benefits derived from it which are esteemed. Meditation has an effect which surpasses all the fundamentals and activities of ritual prayer so that, in one hour devoted to meditation, a traveller can cover more distance than another person would with sixty years' worship.[1] Thus it can happen that, while meditating, a person can be borne, in a flash, beyond both worlds. This is a special effect of meditation. How can it flow from fasting or ritual prayer?"

How can every wayfarer travel like Khizr?
How can every body be as pure as the Prophet's?

Again he said: "Everything has a special effect which, in the pursuit of perfection, cannot be acquired except in it. Fasting has such an effect which is not found elsewhere. Ritual prayer has something special not found elsewhere. Meditation also has an effect not acquired apart from it."

Catch hold of my Sufi garb lest I take to hypocrisy:
Bring me pure wine lest I abandon my devotion.

NOTE AND RFFERENCE

1. The argument is not about meditation and ritual prayer as such, but whether it is better to devote free time to extra ritual prayers or to meditation. Sharafuddin's predeliction for meditation—'tafakkur'—is evident.

Thirty-First Assembly

Auhaduddin,[1] son of the sister of the Great Master, Sheikh Najibuddin Firdausi,[2] was present in the assembly. The prayer-caller gave the call for the afternon prayer. After the call he said: "Upon hearing the blessed name of the Prophet, in all places people place their thumbs over their eyes and quote a tradition. How can this be correct?" The Venerable Master replied: "I have not found that tradition anywhere in the reliable and well-known collections of traditions which are available in these regions. For this reason, the theologians of these parts do not observe it. If they see anybody observing it they do not forbid him either, because it might just be that somebody has come across a genuine tradition concerning this matter, or has heard about one. At any rate, it has come down as a story. One can use that story as a proof of its genuineness provided the story itself is correct.

The story is that a command was once issued to Adam: 'We shall give birth to a son among your posterity. We, who have created 18,000 worlds, have done so out of love for that son of yours.' All the qualities of a prophet have been bestowed upon Adam. Thus it was that Adam expressed the desire of seeing that son of his. He was told: 'We have commanded him to be born at the end of time so how can you see him at the present time? We shall, however, disclose his light to you now.' Afterwards the light of the Prophet was made to shine on Adam's thumbs. Adam looked at them, kissed them and placed them on his blessed eyes."

Afterwards the Venerable Master said: "If the story be true, it could provide a basis for the genuineness of this tradition."

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. The five works—four manuscripts and one printed version—all have this form.
2. Najibuddin was Sharafuddin's own spiritual guide. For this reason Auhaduddin was an honoured guest.

Thirty-Second Assembly

The Helpless One asked whether people could take back what they have given to another person. The Venerable Master replied: "There are seven situations in which it is not correct to take back what one has given away. He then recited the following judicial couplet:

After bestowing a gift can one take it back again?
O friend, see the following mnemonic."

Afterwards he added: " 'dama' Khaziqah' contains seven Arabic letters. Each represents a prohibition for taking back a gift." Afterwards he explained the seven letters in this fashion: d—extremely close connections; m—death of one party; '(i.e. 'ain)—substitution; kh—loss of the thing given, either by sale or gift; z—married state; q—relationship; h—the destruction of the thing offered.[1]

NOTE AND REFERENCE

1. The explanation of these terms pertains to 'fiqh.'

Thirty-Third Assembly

Qazi Minhajuddin was present. The Venerable Master asked him whether his people were free from all troubles. (At that time most of the people of the town were suffering from some disease.[1]) Qazi Minhajuddin replied that they were safe from disease but had other kinds of affliction. The Venerable Master replied: "How can that go away? Affliction accompanies us to the very edge of the grave."

Cursing from friends, cruelty from enemies, tyranny from fate:
What greater pain can one suffer than this?

Afterwards he said: "Men suffer affliction all the time." Later on he added: "I have seen it written, concerning the nature of affliction, that most theologians say that affliction is whatever is difficult for the carnal soul, but the Leader of the Faithful, Ali, has written of it that 'torment is the denial of what one seeks.' "

Afterwards he said: "Everybody, whether noble or commoner, young or old, rich or poor, wants something. There is no exception to this. A person suffers when unable to lay hands on the object desired."

The fruit is sweet, but the arm too short to reach it:
There is pure water within, but the thirsty cannot reach it.

And again:

There is no one who hasn't shed blood out of love for You:
I too seek Him who is the quest of all creation.

Afterwards he said: "The greatest and most exalted of worldly blessings is that of kingship: yet, how many things have kings desired but not obtained?"

NOTE AND REFERENCE

1. Some epidemic was obviously sweeping through the town of Bihar. It is impossible to say what it was, as no details are provided.

Thirty-Fourth Assembly

Qazi Khan enquired what would happen in the next world to girls who died young.[1] The Venerable Master replied: "The instruction concerning them is that, in the next world, God Almighty will give them to whomsoever He wants. Some women have died without getting married, just as have some men. God Almighty will choose which of them will be for whom."

In the meantime someone present in the assembly asked what would happen to somebody who had two husbands. He replied that she would be given to her last husband. The Helpless One asked about the mother of a man's child. He replied: "In the next world, if the mother is a slave-girl, whatever command pertains to slave-girls will apply to her children."[2]

Again he enquired if there was any difference between youths[3] and sons.[4] He replied: "Yes, there is. Sons are those whom God Almighty has created also in heaven for the sake of serving the believers; whereas youths are the sons of the infidels who have died before reaching adolescence. According to one saying, they will be bequeathed to the believers as their servants."

After this he added: "There is a controversy about the children of the polytheists.[5] Where will they go? Some say there is a place called Limbo,[6] situated between Paradise and hell. That is where the children of infidels, who have died before attaining puberty, must be. The authoritative opinion, however—which is held by the majority of theologians—is that they are taken to Paradise and placed at the service of the believers."

Afterwards he said: "Those who opt for Limbo have a good argument, namely that faith is required for entering Paradise,

but they have never possessed faith. Also, infidelity is needed for banishment to hell, but they had not acquired that either. Hence they must go to Limbo, where neither the soul of Paradise nor the torments of hell are found."[7]

Husamuddin, the prayer-leader of Haibat Khan, asked about the meaning of the tradition: 'Anyone who humbles before a rich man, on account of his wealth, loses two thirds of his religion.' Why the restriction of two thirds?" He replied: "The reason for this restriction is that religion rests on three pillars: the heart, the tongue and the limbs. When a person comes forward to abase himself his limbs are involved in this action while his tongue is engaged in singing his praises and making apologies. Thus two thirds of his religion are gone. One third remains—his heart."

At this stage the discussion turned to the nature of religion.[8] He said: "The reception of the divine speech by prophets is called 'revelation'. When the prophets explain this revelation it is called 'invitation'. When a person submits to this it is 'Islam'. The commands and prohibitions of the Lord form the 'Law'. Believing in one's heart and professing with one's tongue is called 'faith'.[9] Faithful adherence to all of these is called 'religion'. The religion of a person who is faithful to all of these is said to be 'perfect'. If anybody's religion is perfect he also is perfect, for a person's perfection is gauged by the perfection of his religion.[10] Whoever, on the other hand, is defective in religion, suffers some loss in it on account of which he is liable to be punished."

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. The reference is to girls who have died before marriage.
2. The assumption that the hierarchical structure of fourteenth-century Indian society would be mirrored by that in heaven indicates its taken-for-grantedness in medieval India.
3. 'Ghulām'. The word also means 'slave'.
4. 'Wildān'.
5. 'Mushrikān'.
6. 'Aʿrāf'.

7. It is fascinating to notice the exact parallelism between this argument for 'a'rāf' and that of medieval Christian theologians for Limbo.

8. 'Dīn'.

9. 'Imān'.

10. It is instructive to notice that Sharafuddin links 'perfection' in religion to a person's adherence to his religion as perfectly as possible.

Thirty-Fifth Assembly

Sheikh Mu'izzuddin said: "If a person acts according to the opinion of an authoritative interpreter of the Law but another one holds a different opinion, what should he do?" The Venerable Master replied: "In such a situation caution has to be exercised in such a way that there may be an accord between both opinions because, if a person acts on the opinion of one interpreter, he can argue, in the next life, for the correctness of his action based on the truth of the opinion. It is possible that, in the next life, the truth of the other opinion is established. Consider, for example, the rubbing of the head during the ablution for prayer. The Great Imam[1] considers that a quarter of the head has to be rubbed, while Imam Mālik[2] thinks that the whole head has to be rubbed. Hence, in this matter, one has to be cautious. A person has to harmonize the two opinions and will rub the whole head."

At this stage Sheikh Mu'izzuddin again said: "Each person follows his own rite.[3] Everyone who adheres firmly to his own rite will act according to its dictates." He replied: "Generally the founders of rites[4] know that they have to be very cautious when it comes to the question of worship. Moreover, truth is one[5] and, although people firmly believe that their rite is correct, they know error is also possible. Likewise the adherents of other rites think it is erroneous but bearing the possibility of being correct. Hence the need for caution. This is the reason why it so happens that one must reconcile the differing opinions because, in this matter, if the next world shows that the injunction of Imam Mālik is correct then the opinion of the Great Imam will naturally be erroneous. It will not be a matter of opinion there—it will be absolute. A person should perform his duties in a realistic manner so that the Law will have no handle to beat him with in the next life. This occurs when, in the matter of worship, a person acts in harmony with all the authoritative opinions."

Again Sheikh Mu'izzuddin said: "It is written that rubbing the whole head is approved. From the point of view of caution it should have been written that it was necessary." He replied: "The principle is that caution is needed in the matter of worship. This is taken for granted. All the rites are in agreement on this. As for saying that it is approved in their own rite, they say that rubbing the whole head is approved in their rite."

He was asked: "Why do worldly theologians abandon all of this and pay no attention to it?" He replied: "Externalist theologians stand in need of a concern for the work of religion. This feeling has departed from them and a concern for rank and position has descended upon them.[6] The sheikh and religiously-committed theologians, however, experience this concern all the time, thinking 'What have I done? How have I done it?' The sheikhs insist that a person should act in such a way as to be in harmony will all opinions, so much so that they hold that a person who touches his sexual organ after ritual ablution breaks his state of ritual purity and has to renew it."

The Helpless One said: "People praying behind a prayer-leader are prohibited from reciting the Fatiha along with him. What should be done?" He replied: "Let them recite the Fatiha. All the sheikhs do. As for the prohibition in this matter, 'Let there be dust in the mouth of anyone who recites behind a prayer-leader,' it is possible that the intention is to insert another Quranic chapter, but how can it be certain that an independent recital is intended?"[7] Afterwards he added: "Each authoritative teacher is obliged to act according to his own interpretation, but in this matter he also has to observe caution, harmonizing his own opinion with that of other interpreters. It cannot therefore be said that he has turned aside from his own opinion and followed that of another because he knows very well that the command of the Law is that caution is necessary in matters of worship. This is why he seeks harmony, not because he is abandoning his own opinion in order to follow that of another. When it comes to practice, one who interprets is equal to one who does not."

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. The 'Great Imam' was Imam Abu Ḥanifa, (d. 767) founder of the School or rite most commonly followed in India, the Ḥanafites.

2. Imam Mālik (d. 795) was the founder of the Mālikis.

3. The word is 'madhhab'. Insofar as one's attention is on Law as expounded in one of the 'madhhab-s' founded by Imam Shafi'i, Imam Hanbal, Imam Abu Ḥanifa or Imam Mālik, it is a 'school' but, insofar as one's attention is on the prescriptions for worship of a particular 'madhhab' it is a 'rite'.

4. These are the four Imams just mentioned.

5. 'Ḥaqq wāḥid ast'.

6. There are several instances of Sharafuddin's manifesting his disapproval of seeking religious posts. For example, when he heard that an old friend of his, Maulana Sadruddin, had been made the Deputy Qazi af Sonargaon, he wrote to him: "I rejoiced when I heard you were well, but my heart was filled with disgust when I heard about your post." (*200 Letters*, no. 44)

7. Sharafuddin clearly encourages recital in the heart in unison with the prayer leader, even with the movement of the lips. He says the prohibition refers to reciting aloud a different chapter and thus breaking the unison of the prayer—something he would never condone. Harmony, yes: dissonance, no.

Thirty-Sixth Assembly

One of those present in the honoured assembly enquired: "Where does today's practice of making petition come from?" The Venerable Master replied: "It has not come to my attention in any reliable book, but there is a story which says that, in a certain city. there was a woman called Maryam. Her son disappeared. He was imprisoned in the royal dungeon. His mother was continually wailing and weeping at the loss of her son. There was a saintly man in the city. The woman went along to see him and explained her predicament. By chance it was the month of Rajab.[1] The saintly man said: 'In two or three days it will be the fifteenth of the month of Rajab. Observe a fast on that day, and pray. That prayer is called a prayerof petition. Say it.' The woman did as she was bidden for the sake of her lost son. By chance, at the verytime the woman finished her prayer there was an immediate response. In the city where her son lay in the royal dungeon the king released him at that very hour. He thus regained his liberty. A few days later he reached home. His mother asked him what had happened. He narrated the story to her. His mother asked him the exact time he had been released. He told her that it happened on the fifteenth of Rajab, and mentioned the time of day. His mother informed him that she had finished praying for him at that very hour."

Afterwards he said: "It is called 'Maryam's Day' for the reason given in the story, but I have not come across this in any reliable book or collection of traditions, nor have the sheikhs who composed prayer manuals included this prayer in their collection. Another point is that, among all the works of the sheikhs, *Qūt ul-Qulūb* (Nourishment for Hearts) is very trustworthy. All the sheikhs have confidence in it. It is acceptable to all. Its author is Khwaja Abu Ṭalib Makki, one of the second generation[2] of the companions of the Prophet. He was

a saintly and scholarly man, close to the period of the Prophet.[3] That is why everybody has a lot of confidence in him, so that all the sheikhs who write about short prayers refer to the *Qūt ul-Qulūb*, affirming that the particular prayer is recorded in it. If anybody doubts this he can check for himself. So, here we have a reliable book, *Qūt ul-Qulūb*, but this prayer is not found in it either, nor is it found among the collection of 'Fragrant Prayers,'[4] or 'Occasional Prayers'."[5]

A discussion about the 'Night of Ascent' arose: on which night did it occur? The Venerable Master said: "The 'Night of Ascent' is on the night of the twenty-seventh of this month."[6] One of those present said: "This has been disputed. Some say it is not the night of the twenty-seventh but some other night." He said: "Although it has been disputed, nevertheless that is the most widely accepted date. It is similar to the dispute concerning the 'Night of Power'. Some say it is the twenty-first, some the twenty-third, some the twenty-fifth. some the twenty-seventh and some the twenty-ninth, but the common opinion is the twenty-seventh. This opinion has gained wide acceptance."

Your palate, mouth, lips and teeth
Are luxuries—until they are put to use!

A discussion about spurious traditions arose. He said: "Handling traditions is an extremely difficult task. Seven centuries have elapsed during which the traditions of the Apostle have come down to us.[7] The Apostle himself has said it is a challenging task. If somebody narrates today what happened yesterday many discrepancies will appear in the narrative. Just imagine what it must be like when seven centuries have elapsed and, in this field, so many different canonical forms have appeared. Who knows, perhaps somebody, in order to bolster his own opinion, might have said: 'The Apostle said such and such. His speech and its meaning was of this nature.' They add to the speech of the Apostle to such an extent that Imam Yusuf Qazi[8] could relate that he had memorized twelve thousand spurious traditions."

At this point one of those present said that a traditionist had come to Delhi. He was saying that some of the traditions contained in the *Mishkāt* and *Hidāya*[9] were of a spurious nature.

The Venerable Master said: "If, in the commentary found at the beginning of each chapter of the Quran, there is a tradition saying that whoever reads the chapter will obtain such and such, then all such traditions are spurious." Afterwards he added: "The spurious nature of traditions can also be ascertained from the effects attributed to the racital of the particular chapter: not one of them will be obtained! For example, above one chapter it is written that whoever recites this chapter will have a thousand of his needs met, yet not one is fulfilled. From this contradiction it is clear that the tradition is spurious—but God knows best!"[10]

A discussion about the remedy for hardness of heart arose. He said: "The treatment for hardness of heart is to contemplate graveyards. It is said that, in the Prophet's assembly, an Arab once arrived and bewailed his hard-heartedness. The Prophet said to him: 'Look at a graveyard!' Thus all suffering from this ailment should do just that, but so as to derive profit, nor like others who are simply like animals". He recited this couplet:

Whoever has no affection for Your face and greatness
Is a beast, lurking in human form.

"Moreover, he will also abandon sin, for hardness of heart is a cause of sin." Afterwards, concerning the signs of softness of heart, he said: "Weeping is a sign of softness of heart. Another is finding delight in worship. Yet another is to pay attention to any sermon or piece of advice from another, finding a place for it in his heart and putting it into execution. Another is showing kindness to people, while one more is fear of sin. These are all signs of softness of heart."[11]

Sayyid Auhaduddin, the son of the sister of the Great Sheikh, Najib ul-Ḥaqq Firdausi, was present. He said: "If a person gives food in honour of the soul of some deceased person is it better than giving money?" The Venerable Master replied: "It is better to give money, for this has wider usage. A poor man has many personal needs which can all be met be dirhams and dinars.[12] So, when somebody gives money, then he can use it to buy what he pleases. On the contrary, if you give food it could so happen that the person was full and unable

to eat. Moreover, silver and gold are the delight, aim and desire of one's carnal soul. When money is separated from oneself there is a pinching effect on the soul.[13] This results in an upset carnal soul. Thus saintly people have thrown themselves into bodily worship to exercise austerity and self-control, but have not enjoyed any divine illumination. Finally they were exhausted. They said: 'Now we will begin to throw away our goods.' Then they began to experience divine favours."

Catch hold of the Sufi garb; bring the cup of wine:
A good name and intoxication cannot hang together.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. The seventh month of the Muslim lunar calendar.
2. The term is used loosely to mean an early authoritative source. As Makki died in 996—i.e. 364 years after the Prophet—the reader can judge how loosely the term has been used.
3. We moderns are more finicky about chronological exactitude than were men of Sharafuddin's age and ilk.
4. 'Riyāḥin-i ad'iya'.
5. 'Namāz-ha-i mawāsim'.
6. i.e. Rabi ul-Awwal, the third month of the Muslim calendar.
7. Sharafuddin is speaking in 1350.
8. He was a leading disciple of Imam Abu Hanifa.
9. These are two very famous collections of traditions which were widely used in medieval India.
10. From the above discussion it is clear that Sharafuddin was alive to the whole issue of spurious traditions and that he understood their genesis. When speaking formally on the topic he is very strict (cf. sixth assembly). While imparting spiritual teaching, however, he uses whatever comes to mind in order to strengthen the point he is making. At such times he is concerned with the didactic value of a tradition, not its authenticity.
11. 'Sakhtī-i dil' and 'narmī-i dil' are the terms for hardness and softness of heart. Sharafuddin's preference is clear.
12. These were silver and gold coins.
13. Sharafuddin's shrewd observation is as true today as it was in his own day!

Thirty-Seventh Assembly

The Venerable Master had come out for a visit to a shrine. From there he came to the garden of Khwaja Mahmud Iwaz. There was a raised platform constructed beneath a tree. He sat down there for some time. As soon as the Khwaja heard of this he came, along with some of his companions. He had the felicity of kissing his feet. After some time Sheikh Rustum and Sheikh Wahiduddin, disciples of Sheikh Nizamuddin,[1] came, and some disciples who were government officials also arrived. He remained there till the time for evening prayer. What came into the defective hearing and shallow understanding of this Helpless One has been recorded.

There was a discussion about the record[2] of Sheikh Usman Haruni—may the mercy of God and an abundance of blessings be upon him—which Khwaja Mu'inuddin Sanjari had compiled. In the very beginning of that record it is mentioned that Khwaja Usman Haruni said, on the first day: 'I have caused you to reach God.'[3] Khwaja Mahmud Iwaz asked, in this connection, what the meaning of this saying might be, that 'such and such a dervish caused so and so to reach God.'

The Venerable Master explained: "First of all it is necessary to know what is meant by 'union' in the terminology[4] of this group and as found in the dictionary. In this way understanding is possible. The dictionary explains union as a joining of two bodies, or of two substances, but this does not occur between a human being and the Lord. In the terminology of this group, however, separation from what is not God and being united to God in a very close way, is known as 'union with God.' Insofar as a person's heart is separated from what is other than God, to that extent his heart is united to God. In other words, if anybody's heart is preoccupied with God, this is called 'acquisition,'[5] for a 'united one' has reached God,

namely he has become separated from other-than-God and united to God to the extent that his entire preoccupation is with God. Everyone whose separation is complete experiences perfect union with God. Hence it is said that whoever is not separated is not united. In the sayings of the sheikhs we read, 'Ablution is separation, while prayer is union.'

So long as we hanker after name and fame
Your pain finds no entry to our hearts.

In this matter the Prophet was outstanding for both this world and the next were brought before his blessed gaze. He was not attracted by anything he saw in either. Inevitably he acquired perfect union.

How can you tell a mediator he hasn't loved?
Never has he gambled with this world and the next!

On the 'Night of Ascent' he went beyond this created universe—something which never happened to the other prophets. If the Chosen One's attention had rested on anything other than God perfect union would not have been possible. This perfect severing pertained to the Chosen One but not to any other prophet, or to any saint. Thus it has been said, 'There comes a time when I am so close to God that there is no room for any angel to be nearer, nor any prophet.' "

The Venerable Master said: "Sheikh Usman Haruni said: 'I have caused you to reach God,' meaning that he aroused a firm resolve within the breast of Khwaja Mu'inuddin. He removed from his heart whatever preoccupation was previously in it for anything other than God, and caused it to be absorbed with God. This is the meaning of 'causing someone to reach God,' for the saints are men of supernatural power in the kingdom of Almighty God. They exercise this power for whatever they want in the kingdom of the Lord, and this is lawful for them therein. Sheikh Usman Haruni exercised supernatural power by virtue of his sanctity in the heart of Khwaja Mu'inuddin so that he was separated from all things other than God and caused him to become absorbed in God. This is called a 'conversion' i.e. he changed from what he was: he was an idol-worshipper and became a worshipper of God;

he was a demon and became a man; he was bronze but became gold, and so forth.

One precondition of being a spiritual guide is that a person should possess supernatural power. In the kingdom of God whoever does not have this power is not fit to be a spiritual guide. Thus it is that he gives this world to one and the next world to another and, if he wishes, he gives both of them. He will invoke one thing yet reject another. All of this power belongs to him in the kingdom of God. It is also a fact that, whatever he wishes to happen, does.

Someone might object that no creature has the power of getting whatever he wishes. The answer is given in this fashion. The meaning of the saying, 'Whatever he wishes to happen, does' is that he wishes the very thing which God intends to happen, and God's intention in that regard is that the thing should certainly take place. Thus it happens that, whatever he wishes to happen, does. Here also a difficulty is brought forward: How do they know what God's intention is? They do so by means of the light of sanctity which they possess. That is how they will what God does, not that things will take place because of their own desire."

Surely you have heard of the existence of an Unseen
Presence?
In the midst of the throng, my heart is elsewhere.

Afterwards he said: "Satan was commanded to prostrate himself before Adam, and many masters of hidden meanings, such as 'Ain ul-Quzat and others, say that, although he was commanded to prostrate himself, the divine intention was that he should not do so. Satan became aware of this intention and, abandoning the command, acted according to the intention. If he had executed the command on this occasion, it would have shown immaturity, for love cannot allow anything to happen which is against the intention of the Beloved. Love's command is that the lover carry out the wish of the Beloved. The Beloved can both command and desire. In the meantime the lover was informed that the desire of the Beloved was different from the command. In this situation the demands of love compel one to act according to what is desired and against

what is commanded. Abandoning the former for the sake of the latter would indicate immaturity."

How can poor Sa'di be justly cursed
For seeing such a face and stopping, amazed?

He said: "Here it is mentioned that the lowest stage of love is agreement so, where there is disobedience there is, of necessity, opposition. The answer given is that this opposition is apparent while, in actual fact, there is agreement, for acting in accordance with the desire of the Beloved is not called 'opposition'. For example, if a father tells his son that he is ashamed of the service he renders him and does not want him to serve him in the future, yet the son does not thereafter abandon serving his father but comes to him and assists him. Who could label this 'disobedience', for he is acting without any command from his father? The desire of the father is that his son should serve him. Apparently he neglected what was commanded but he has actually acted in accordance with his father's wish. In this fashion nobody will say that he has neglected his father's command."

At this stage he said, in amazement and astonishment: "These deep meanings found in Satan have been perceived by such sages. They feel amazed and cry out, 'O God, what is this? What label can we fix to this, that a person gambles with his life but does not deviate in the slightest from the demands of love!

Everybody experiences sorrows, religious and worldly:
After the grief of vision, they are fed foolish sorrow.

Since they see this in whatever has been written concerning the demands of love, the result is that they say that a novice should be Satan-like so that he might act like him. Just as he did not act against the desire of the Beloved but gambled with his life, in the same way novices should be straight-forward, ready to risk their necks, and Satan-like. Then they will do something worthwhile. If they see themselves in the middle, however, what will they do? Love does not deviate afterwards, whether one is thrown into hell or raised up to Paradise; whether one is favoured or passed over. What is important is that a person should obey the command of love in this manner."

I hold none dear in all the world, except You;
Whether You reject what I offer or accept it.

Afterwards he said: "It is said that Satan takes as much pride in being cursed as the whole world does in receiving God's mercy. The root of this is said to be that both cursing and mercy come from the Beloved, and a lover rejoices in whatever comes to him from the Beloved, whether it be cursing or compassion. Indeed, discriminating between one and the other would indicate immaturity, for both emanate from the Beloved. Why differentiate? Whether it be a curse or mercy, it is one and the same. Blame cannot be distinguished from praise. The important thing is that it comes from the Beloved. If He gives a shoe or bestows a crown, it is all the same. It is a memento of the Beloved, whether it be a black blanket or a rosary."

Why do you waste your time speaking intelligently to me?
O unpercipient ones, can't you see I'm drunk?

Afterwards he said: "It is related that Imam Shibli was jealous, for he said: 'I am jealous that he has borne away the curse.' "

I would like someone to love none but me:
Woe to you for entering the thoughts of strangers!

At this stage, Sheikh Rustum said: "In several places it is mentioned that Khwaja Shibli lived among some hermaphrodites." The Venerable Master said: "On several occasions Imam Shibli disappeared. However much people looked for him they could not find him. After several years he was found among the hermaphrodites with henna-covered hands, collyrium on his eyelashes, and wholly bedecked in the fashion of hermaphrodites. People said: 'O Master of the Way, what are you doing here?' Imam Shibli replied: 'Outwardly I appear to be a man but I am incapable of performing manly deeds. Hence, inwardly I have become a woman. So, my condition is that of an hermaphrodite. Thus I wished to join the hermaphrodites.' "

I was inclined towards asceticism and repentance:
Love came and said: Don't peddle hypocrisy!

Maulana Wahiduddin quoted: "And surely My curse is upon you until the Day of Judgement" (Q38: 78). It applies till the Day of Judgement. What has been ordained for afterwards?" He replied: "Whatever is fixed on the Day of Retribution is intended for all eternity. In other words, the curse will remain upon him forever. In the commentary of Zahid this is also mentioned."

Qazi Ashrafuddin said: "What does this saying mean, which comes from a holy man: 'For thirty years I carried out whatever I was commanded: now He does whatever I say.' " The Venerable Master replied: "Whoever obeys what God commands and abstains from what He has forbidden has been promised God's good pleasure. Anyone who has become acceptable to God is not pleased with any grandeur which is opposed to what He has said, just as He is not pleased with anything contrary to what He has commanded or prohibited. Nothing will be found on his tongue which is not in accord with the will of God. That is why he said: 'He does whatever I say.' 'Be faithful to your covenant with Me and I will fulfil My covenant with you' (Q2: 40). One explanation of this has been given in the following words: 'If someone is for God, then God is for him.' From this the same meaning emerges." He recited this couplet:

This saying of yours is as bright as the day,
Even if, like Sa'adi, you wander in the dark.

He said: "O brother, the wealth and blessing of this Sufi group cannot be contained in writing or talking." He recited the couplet:

Were I to take a century to tell love's story
I would not have to parrot a word from any book.[7]

Qazi Minhajuddin had brought his sons along to kiss the Master's feet. The Venerable Master, with his own blessed hand, placed a cap on the head of each. The Helpless One said: "When both of them grow up, will they have to pledge fealty and submission? Will this be considered enough?" He replied: "No, for they have not yet reached the age of responsibility and discretion. This is a blessing. It is hoped that they

will receive an abundance of the divine mercy. If, however, they afterwards become acquainted with this state and embrace it and openly profess it, then this would come about, for they would say: 'We have obtained this for ourselves. Having reached the age of responsibility and discretion we have obtained it once again from him.'"[8]

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. From the context it is clear that Nizamuddin Auliya (d. 1325), the famous Chishti saint of Delhi, is being referred to.
2. The Persian is 'malfūẓ' and refers to the 'record' of what went on during the assemblies. The reputed author of this particular 'record' is better known as Mu'inuddin Chishti (d. 1236) the founder of the Chishti order in India.
3. 'Man turā bekhudā'ī rasānīdam'.
4. 'Iṣṭilāḥ'.
5. 'Ḥasb'.
6. Imam Shibli (d. 945) was one of the great Sufi Masters.
7. In MS 'A' a new assembly—no. 39—begins after this couplet. The introductory sentence, not found in other MSS, is: "The felicity of kissing the Master's feet was obtained in an upper room of the store house."
8. The genesis of the solution of this particular practical difficulty is recorded in *Ma'dan ul-Ma'ānī*, chapter 19.

Thirty-Eighth Assembly

The Venerable Master was reclining. Someone stood by his side, fanning him. For some days the Venerable Master thought that the wind has its own abode, but this is not so. At this time he read that it was the air itself which was in motion but, on account of its very refined nature, it could not be seen. The discussion turned to the glance[1] of the saints. He said: "The glance of the saints extends not merely to the east and west but also to the seven heavens; to the earth; to the divine throne and footstool; and to the lower part of the earth. Nothing is hidden from their vision. 'Ain ul-Quzat has written somewhere that, if it were possible for anything to remain hidden from the divine knowledge it could remain hidden from the knowledge of a traveller."

Afterwards he said: "It happens in the same way with all things: they hear whatever can be heard; see whatever is visible; and whatever is intelligible is understood by them. Hence it is said that one prerequisite of a spiritual guide is that he has become an overseer of kingdoms. In other words, he is informed about whatever comes into view from the Hidden World, by day or night."

A Sufi is not someone decked in blue:
The one clad in purity, he is the Sufi.

Maulana Husamuddin, the prayer-leader of Haibat Khan, observed: "It seems that this glance refers to that of the soul." He replied: "Yes, the Sufis call it 'insight'.[2] It is a quality of the soul.[3] Nothing in the entire universe is hidden from its view. If this is not so, it indicates that this quality has been vanquished, for the soul is all light and brilliance, whereas the carnal soul[4] is characterized by complete darkness. When the darkness of the carnal soul increases, the light and brilliance of the soul is overshadowed by it. That is why it does not see. If

a person drives far away this darkness of the carnal soul, the light and brilliance of the soul come to birth. Nothing remains hidden from its sight. This is the sort of quality possessed by the soul."

Afterwards he said: "No material thing can act as a veil for the soul: within or without, near or far, as far as it is concerned, all are the same."

Between You and me, where is there room for 'between'?
Between You and me, 'between' cannot squeeze in.

A discussion arose that, nowadays, novices did not open up to God quickly. He said: "The reason why novices are not granted openness to God quickly is because they do not observe the rules. In this situation union with God ceases. They do not act as they should in compliance with the rules. This is the fault either of the novice or of the spiritual guide, or of both. That is why the work does not go smoothly. This is because there are prerequisites and rules for spiritual guides as well as for novices. If there is defect from either side in the prerequisites or rules no effect will be seen. For this reason you should realize what is meant by 'Enter houses through their doors' (Q2: 189). The teaching of the Lord is that, in every activity, one should enter by the door so that, if somebody wants to enter the house, he would not do so by another way which might be beyond the rule of reason."

In the meantime, one of those present enquired: "Master, is it the task of a novice to proceed as directed by his spiritual guide?" The Venerable Master replied: "The law concerning the conditions applicable to a disciple is that he should walk in accordance with the saying, 'Discipleship means abandoning one's own will.' What is discipleship? It means abandoning one's own will in what pertains to religion and the world and proceeding as directed by one's spiritual guide. The novice neither stops nor starts as he himself wishes, so much so that it is said that, if the spiritual guide commands the novice to abandon something which is obligatory and necessary, and the novice wonders how he could do such a thing, it would be said that he has turned aside from the demands of discipleship and

reached the point of opposition. 'There is no discipleship involving opposition."

Intelligent people abstain from what may ruin them:
The religion of lovers is something quite different!

If at this time they hear something from their guide or notice something in him they talk so much about it that there is no end to the matter. They search books of traditions to see if it is so, if any precedent can be found. Now, in this situation, how can the correct way be found?"

The Helpless One enquired: "It is really true that the abandonment of something that is obligatory and necessary is commanded?" He replied: "Taking poison leads to self destruction. In the same way the abandonment of what is necessary is the ruination of religion. It so happens that physicians very often make use of poison to effect a cure. In a similar fashion spiritual guides often require people to abandon what is obligatory and necessary as part of their treatment."[5]

Thus it is clear that, in my opinion,
There is not a sinless ascetic in the city.

The aforementioned Husamuddin said: "If somebody snatches some food from another and eats it, then the act of eating is unlawful, but what is the command with regard to the food itself?" He replied: "That is not unlawful in itself, except in so far as it involves eating what belongs to another. After eating it naturally comes under 'eating', for its substance is destroyed by the very act of eating. After a person, on his own authority, pays the price, then it can be said that his ownership has been established and, at that time, it becomes lawful."

Afterwards he said: "A student mentioned that, in the assembly of Maulana Wahiduddin, one tradition was found that said: 'Nothing forbidden will enter the gullet of a believer.' In the same place it is also mentioned in the assembly of the Maulana that, if someone grabs what belongs to another and eats it, the thing is obviously destroyed." Afterwards he answered the difficulty in this fashion: "As soon as a person eats what belongs to another the substance of the stolen food is destroyed. The responsibility for recompense certainly falls upon him. Since this is so, it cannot be said to be the property of the one

who took it. It certainly became his, but not correctly. 'You can eat whatever you purchase.' In line with this, it becomes lawful. Afterwards he will have to make recompense, either in this world or in the next."

Afterwards he said: "I have seen the following tradition in books: What if somebody snatches some money from someone and afterwards uses it to buy something? For example, he goes to a butcher and asks for ten jitals'[6] worth of meat. The first thing he has to do is take the meat from the butcher, then hand over to him ten jitals. The tradition is that such meet is lawful; it cannot become unlawful because, after having taken possession of the thing sold, he evidently has the responsibility of paying for it. By all means he has to hand over the money. If, on the other hand, he gave the ten jitals first and said, 'Give me ten jitals' worth of meat,' and he gave him the meat, this would be unlawful."

The aforementioned Husamuddin asked: "What is the effect of giving the money first or afterwards?" He replied: "If he takes the thing sold he has to pay the price because he has acquired the obligation to do so, and has to do so by all means. An argument may arise about how the money used to pay for the item came into your possession, whether it was lawful or unlawful. If, however, the money is handed over first, this is the thing exchanged. The meat is given in lieu of the money. The same command applies to this as to the thing exchanged. If the thing exchanged is unlawful, so too is whatever is handed over in lieu of it."

After this the Venerable Master turned his blessed countenance towards those present in the assembly and said: "When buying and selling this is the procedure you should follow: first take possession of the goods and then pay for them. Although the money used is not unlawful, it could happen that some kind of doubt could arise concerning it. This procedure should be followed as a precaution."

Three times he looked around at those present in the assembly and said: "This is the procedure that should be followed in buying and selling."

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. 'Naẓar'.
2. 'Baṣīrat'.
3. 'Rūḥ'.
4. 'Nafs'.
5. Any experienced spiritual guide will understand the point Sharafuddin is making. Nevertheless, the whole topic is an extremely delicate one, for it can lead to the practice of sublime virtue—or degenerate into crass sinfulness.
6. A 'jital' was a copper coin during the Sultanate period.

Thirty-Ninth Assembly

Very many of the people of the town had come to extend their good wishes for the new month. Qazi Khan asked: "What is the meaning of fixing on six days, as we find in the verse, 'in six days'?" The Venerable Master replied: "I have not come across anything, and I too have been searching for it in various commentaries. I have not found anything anywhere, but I have seen it mentioned in the commentary of Imam Zahid that it is an 'instruction for his followers,' but this has not proved very helpful, because this meaning can be drawn from one hour or one day, for God Most High is Almighty and can create in the twinkling of an eye. 'Instruction for his followers' would mean that He creates in one day or in one hour. Therefore what wisdom is contained in the fact that He took six days to create the universe?"

After this he said: "I had borrowed the *Tafsīr-i-Kabīr*[1] (The Great Commentary) from Qazi Mu'inuddin in order to study it. I began to study the first volume. What is there for me to study? Each point is proved with arguments, and each point is also answered with arguments. I said: 'So many arguments are above the capacity of a man like me!' I studied the work for a while, and then sent it back. On the other hand, this commentary has proved to be an astonishing one. That great sage,[2] has brought in whatever was needed according to the exigencies of the faith. He added nothing that could be considered excessive and prove fatiguing for the mind."

Afterwards he told this story: "Qazi Badruddin, the Qazi of Arwal,[3] had come here.[4] He was saying that whenever a Qur'anic verse cropped up in class and Maulana Shamsuddin Yaḥya felt the need of consulting a commentary about it then, in spite of the fact that he had many commentaries in Arabic, he used to tell his servant to bring the commentary of Zahid, volume two or volume three. He would bring the particular

volume that had been requested. The Maulana would glance at it. Each time this difficulty would occur to me: 'How is it that the Maulana can pass over so many commentaries in Arabic and ask for this one by Zahid, which is in Persian?' One day I had an opportunity to ask for an explanation. I said: Master, you have so many commentaries in Arabic. This being so, why do you have recourse to this commentary in Persian? Thereupon Maulana Shamsuddin gave this reply: 'The reason is that, in the commentaries in Arabic there is much eloquence, endless rhetoric and innumerable meanings. I have not found the taste and sweetness in any other commentary to match what I have found in this Persian one.' "

Afterwards the Venerable Master said: "When Imam Zahid finished writing his commentary he kept it inside his house for some days. All of his disciples and companions said: 'Such an authentic work has been produced. If the Revered Master brings it out each of us will transcribe it.' That sage would not give it to anyone. After much entreaty he brought the work out one day. This took place in Baghdad.[5] He beckoned to one of his companions and said: 'Take each of these four volumes and throw them into the Tigris.' The companion brought the four volumes outside and the others followed him. They said: 'By no means can you throw them into the Tigris! What condition was it that led this sage to speak in this fashion? It is not advisable to throw them into the Tigris. We shall keep them somewhere for the moment.' They told their companion that he was to say that he had thrown them into the river if the Master enquired about the matter.

The next day he went to the Master. He said: 'Did you throw them away?' He replied, 'Yes'. Again he enquired: 'What did you see?' He answered: 'I didn't see anything.' 'Then you didn't throw them away. Go now and do so!' Thereupon the companions said that there was something at the bottom of this. The man went off and threw all four volvmes into the Tigris. As soon as he did so the water was cleft asunder and he saw a box appear into which all the four volumes fell. Then the water settled back again. The man returned to the sage. Once again he enquired if he had thrown the volumes. He said he had. Upon being asked what he had seen he related how the water had parted and a box appeared into which the volumes had

fallen, and then the water had returned to its original position. Thereupon the sage said: 'Now you have thrown it.'

Thus the day passed. Next morning he called the man and said: 'Go and bring back such of the four volumes.' The man went off. He found all four volumes on the bank of the Tigris. He picked them up and brought them to the Master. He opened them up and saw, here and there, lines had been drawn. He said: 'Don't copy out the positions where a line has been drawn, but copy out the portions where you find no line.' The companions were perplexed by what had taken place. They all gathered together. They told the Master that it was very difficult for them to understand what had taken place. If the whole affair was explained to them it would remove a thorny problem from their minds.

After that the Master paused for a while and said: 'I'll tell you. When I finished writing I sent the work to my brother, Khiẓr,[6] with the request that I had undertaken this venture. I said: 'Please go through this work and cross out anything you find fault with.' So these lines which you see here and there were drawn by Khwaja Khizr.' "

When the Venerable Master reached this point he said: "Wherever a difficult verse occurs, Imam Zahid has begun his commentary on it by stating that its explanation is difficult. Each person has written something different about the verse. Errors have arisen which are beyond the principles and rules of the Law. First of all, those errors have to be eliminated so that the explanation of the verse may be given in a fitting manner. He has marshalled the errors one by one and written that they are errors. He has said that he will write what is correct and worthy of credence. Underneath he has added: 'Believe this! I shall stand as surety for it on the Day of Resurrection.' "

At this juncture those present in the assembly said: "Master, give us some examples of the errors that he has mentioned in order to help our understanding." He replied: "There are many. One is that it is said that the Apostle had fallen in love with Zainab, the wife of his adopted son, Zaid, and he kept his love concealed within his heart. Zainab was

from a noble family and was extremely beautiful while Zaid was a client.[7] She was not submissive to him. An estrangement had grown up between them. Zaid repeatedly approached the Apostle and requested his permission to divorce her because she showed no compatibility with him and persisted in her hostility and animosity. The Apostle, in his heart, wanted him to divorce her, but told him not to divorce her. Both of these are errors. In this commentary we read: 'You and I are forbidden to keep in our heart love for the wife of another. How then could there be any suspicion that a prophet could have love for the wife of another in his heart? How much more, with respect to our Prophet, could anyone have such a suspicion regarding such a king?'

Again it is said that his heart wanted the divorce but he told Zaid not to divorce her. This is also wrong for, if we have something in our heart yet we speak out something contrary to that then this is hypocrisy. This is not permitted for you or me, so how could such a fault proceed from a prophet?

Afterwards he has written under this: 'The correct version is that God Almighty, in the Qur'an, has announced, 'God will bring it to light' (Q 33:37), namely, 'The Lord will make known whatever is in your heart.' What was in the heart of the Apostle was that, in the era of ignorance,[8] it was unlawful to desire the wife of one's adopted son, just as it was to desire the wives of the sons of one's loins. God Almighty sent word to our Apostle: 'Zaid will divorce Zainab. We shall make her lawful for you.' It occurred to the Apostle's heart that the prohibition would be abrogated by his action, not what was said in those stories, 'Muhammad has fallen in love with Zainab and hopes that Zaid will divorce her, even though he was telling him not to divorce her.' This is a great fault.

He has also mentioned the error of those who say that the prophet Solomon suffered a decline of his kingdom for forty days and the reason was that his wife had brought an idol into his house. She worshipped it for forty days. On account of this misfortune Solomon's kingdom suffered for forty days. This is also an error because it is not allowed for you or me to keep an infidel woman in our houses. Since Solomon's wife

worshipped an idol she was an infidel. How is it possible for a prophet to keep an infidel woman in his home? Again it is said that, if someone's wife does something bad in his own home and her husband is ignorant that 'he was a transgressor' (Q 32:18) then, since he was ignorant of his own family, yet if a prophet's wife worships an idol he will certainly find out about it.

And again, it is said that the glance of the prophet David fell upon the wife of Uriah. He was attracted towards her. Afterwards he sent Uriah to a certain place so that he might be killed there and thus he would be able to marry his wife. It should be known that this also is an error, for you and I are forbidden to send anyone anywhere for the purpose of having him killed, so how could a prophet of God do so?[9]

It can be said that these and other similar errors have been cut out in that sage's commentaries on difficult verses, while that which is correct and worthy of credence has been brought forward.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. This is the famous commentary by Fakhruddin Razi (d. 1209).
2. i.e. Imam Zahid. The reader will have noticed that Sharafuddin has frequently referred to this commentary. It was in Persian.
3. i.e. he was the judge of Arwal in Gaya District, Bihar.
4. i.e. to the khanqah on the outskirts of Bihar town.
5. The reader may be surprised to find this 'story' has Imam Zahid composing a Qur'anic commentary in Persian in Baghdad, the seat of Arabic learning! As the 'story' progresses, however, this surprise will probably wane.
6. Khiẓr was a legendary saintly figure. In India he is often associated with rivers.
7. Zaid had been presented to Muḥammad by his wife Khadijah as a slave. Muḥammad freed him and adopted him as his son. He was an Abyssinian.
8. The reference is to pre-Islamic Arabia.
9. Zahid's basic premise is the doctrine of the sinlessnes of the prophets. If this is so, of course, all historical evidence to the contrary is inadmissible for a person who holds such a doctrine.

Fortieth Assembly

Maulana Karimuddin said that there was a certain scholar who had a touch of madness. He often came to Maulana Qeyamuddin and said that there was a tradition of the Prophet which said, 'Too much of this world is harmful for the next.' Once I asked Maulana Qeyamuddin what it meant, and whether it was correct that it was a tradition of the Prophet. Maulana Qeyamuddin said: "He's a mad fellow. What reliance can you put on his word?" The Venerable Master said: "God knows best. If it is a tradition, I would explain it as meaning that, if somebody has a sufficiency of this world's goods and yet seeks after more, then those extra things cannot advance the work of the next world. In fact, they would prove harmful for the world to come."

Again he asked: "What could be said if he has more than he needs but does not seek anything else?" He replied: "Here I would say that the abundance which he possesses will lead to a very comfortable and enjoyable life. To the extent that he gets caught up in an easy and comfortable life, to that extent work geared to the next world is hindered."

The Helpless One said: "If he does not derive any advantage from it—it's simply there—how will it be accounted in this situation?" He replied: "His intention in keeping things is either to raise his standard of living or to meet his expenses. It is not fitting if his intention is to live in a more luxurious fashion. In that instance, what I have just said would apply. If his intention, however, is to meet his necessary expenses then let him go ahead and do so, for his intention is laudable."

A discussion about 'setting aside' arose. He said: "The word removal[1] occurs in traditions and in some places, 'the freedom of God' occurs: 'The eighty masters of the freedom of God

Almighty.' This is connected with what has been related. What is this? 'They are freed from what has happened and from what they will do, and absolutely.' This is connected with what has been related."

A discussion concerning Sayyid Auhaduddin[2] arose. Maulana Karimuddin said: "Who is this noble Sayyid who is visiting the Venerable Master?" The Venerable Master replied: "He was born of my Sheikh's sister, and is the son of Sayyid Alauddin Jyuri. Sayyid Alauddin was a religious scholar. He had a command over all branches of knowledge and was also an acknowledged spiritual leader and of sound lineage. My Sheikh studied both Qur'anic exegesis and the traditions of the Prophet with him. Sayyid Alauddin had divided up the whole week. One day was devoted to jurisprudence; another day was devoted to syntax, logic and polemics; another to basic principles and theology; another to Qur'anic exegesis and the study of traditions. In this fashion he taught a particular subject. Now all the theologians, sheikhs and religious leaders of Delhi used to go to the king. The Sayyid was the only one who never went to the king. It reached the point where, on some occasions when it was announced that all the important people in the city were to be present at the royal court, all of them were—except Sayyid Alauddin. He used to say: 'Whatever happens, let it happen, but I shall never go to the door of the king.' This was his mind."

The Helpless One said: "It has been heard from the blessed lips of Sayyid Auhaduddin that, 'My mother, and the Venerable Master, the great Sheikh Najıbuddin, come from the same mother, whereas Sheikh Ruknuddin and Sheikh Niẓamuddin are from another mother.' " The Venerable Master replied: "Yes, in the house of the deceased 'Imaduddin Firdausi in Nauhatta there were two brothers, Amir Khurd and Amir Buzurg. The former had a daughter.[3] My Sheikh and the mother of Sayyid Auhaduddin are from her."

Later on he added: "Before this time, Sheikh Ruknuddin was enjoying fame and acclaim in this field. He was celebrating the feast days of the saints. Moreover he it was who introduced the practice into Delhi.[4] At that time Sheikh Nizamuddin[5] had recently arrived at Ghiyaspur[6] where he had begun to reside.

At that time he had not yet acquired fame but, day by day, his spiritual riches and blessings went on increasing. Sheikh Ruknuddin used to invite Sheikh Nizamuddin to feast day celebrations and he would participate in them.

The mother of my Sheikh was a remarkable woman. She had been blessed so abundantly that she was referred to as a 'sheikh'. One day she said to Sheikh Ruknuddin: 'What sort of a man is this Nizamuddin Badayuni, living in Ghiyaspur, concerning whom people are saying so much, and how could I see him?' Sheikh Ruknuddin replied: 'I shall invite him for a feast day and prepare a special place for him in the house. I shall invite him there. When he arrives there and sits down then, from a place I shall indicate to you, you will see him. I shall be in the gathering. I shall indicate who he is with my finger.'

And so it was done. My Sheikh's mother went to the place from which she was told she would be able to see him, while Ruknuddin himself joined the gathering along with Sheikh Nizamuddin. There he indicated him with his finger. My Sheikh's mother saw him, and then retired to her quarters. Afterwards Sheikh Ruknuddin said to her: 'You have seen Sheikh Nizamuddin. How did he appear to you?' She replied: 'I saw a radiance on his forehead which indicated that he would do something in Delhi the like of which nobody else has ever done.' "

Afterwards he added: "Sheikh Alauddin Jyuri and Sheikh Nizamuddin[7] studied the *Mashāriq*[8] together under Sayyid Sharafuddin. I have heard this from the lips of Khwaja Nizamuddin. He said to me: 'Once I had arrived in Lakhnauti.[9] It so happened that I was going to Delhi. Maulana Badruddin gave me a gold ring, saying: 'Take this to Sayyid Alauddin Jyuri as a memento from me.' Likewise three or four others gave me something to carry to him as a memento. I myself set aside something from myself and put it along with the other mementoes.

When I reached Delhi I went to his residence. It was siesta time. I sat down in his hospice. A servant came to me and asked me where I was coming from. I told him I had come from Bihar but, as it was siesta time, the Venerable Sayyid

should not be informed, for I had arrived at an inopportunate time. I would wait for a while. Afterwards he could be informed. The servant agreed with me. Finally he got up and went inside about his business.

Now it so happened that the servant entered the area where Sayyid Alauddin was living. He saw that the Sayyid had plastered mud over his hair for his bath. It so happened that he enquired who was in the hospice. The servant replied that a man had arrived from Bihar. The Sayyid said: 'If I complete my bath there will be a delay. The man might be vexed at this.' He told the servant to bring him another robe. The servant brought him one which he tied around his body. So, with his head covered with mud he called him in. The servant came and told me to come inside for he was calling me. I replied: 'I had forbidden you to say anything. Why did you inform him?' He explained what had happened. Well, I went inside and embraced him. He said to me: 'I had plastered my head with mud. I heard that you had arrived. I said to myself: 'If I wait till I am finished with my bath you might be displeased, which should not happen. That is why I called you.'

After that I also asked to be excused and placed each of the items entrusted to me before him. First I produced the ring, saying that it was a memento from Maulana Badruddin. Then I gave him each of the other items. Finally I brought forth my own gift, saying that it was from me. Afterwards it occurred to the Sayyid that, not only had I brought things to him from other people but, on top of that, I had brought something of my own. He asked me if I was anyone's disciple. I said that I was. He asked me whose, and I told him that I was Sheikh Nizamuddin's. As soon as I said that the Sayyid exclaimed: 'So that's where it's from! This quality of his has come to you.' Afterwards he said: 'Listen to this story about him. Your Sheikh and I were both studying the *Mashāriq* under Sayyid Sharafuddin. Whenever Sheikh Nizamuddin came to Sayyid Sharafuddin he would bring something for him. He never appeared empty-handed in front of him. If he came four or five times a day he would certainly bring something each time. One day it occurred to Sayyid Sharafuddin that very many students come daily to study with him yet, apart from him,

nobody else thought of this, only he used to bring something whenever he came to him. This thought pleased him and, in this state, he prayed for the worthy Sheikh in this manner: 'My you be greatly blessed! What you have now received comes from there.' "

After this the Venerable Master said: "Everybody who has something bestowed upon him certainly will find beforehand a sign within himself by which percipient people distinguish a person destined for good fortune from one destined for ill."

We know what brocade is and striped cloth from Ray:
We know what real love is and what is feigned.

At this point a discussion about service arose. He said: "Service is a wonderful work. It is one of the doors leading to blessings and mercy. Very many promises are associated with service."

At this stage this Helpless One recited this tradition which is found in the work of the Blessed Master known as *Ma'dan ul-Ma'ānī*[10] (A Mine of Sublime Realities): 'God looks after the needs of His servant as long as His servant looks after the needs of his brother Muslim.' The Venerable Master asked: "What does this mean, that there are innumerable promises?" Thereupon he spoke with great earnestness, saying: "Service is a wonderful work, a great work: 'the one who served really worked!' Whoever served became a master."

What can I place at the feet of a rival except my head?
One craving for a kingdom will kiss the feet of slaves.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. ' Raf' '. The meaning of this paragraph is not clear.
2. As previously seen the young man's name was 'Auhaduddin' (thus A,E) not 'Wahiduddin' (thus B,C,D).
3. The Persian is 'dukhtar-i īshān būd'. It is known from other sources that her father was, in fact, Amir Khurd.
4. Considering the popularity of the celebrations of the feast days of the saints—' 'urs ' (literally 'marriage' i.e. the day on which the heavenly nuptials are celebrated, for the death day is the one celebrated)—this information is of considerable historical interest.

5. i.e. Nizamuddin Auliya.

6. Nizamuddin spent the rest of his life there and lies buried there. The locality is nowadays called 'Nizamuddin' and boasts an inter-state railway station bearing this name.

7. i.e. Nizamuddin Auliya.

8. This was a standard work of traditions very popular in Medieval India. Sharafuddin's reported statement that Nizamuddin Auliya had studied this work under Sayyid Sharafuddin contradicts the general opinion, based on the *Siyar ul-Auliyā*, that he had studied it under Maulana Kamaluddin Zahid.

9. Lakhnauti was the capital of Bengal and lay north of the Ganga.

10. This work, compiled by Zain Badr Arabi, preceded the present one.

Forty-First Assembly

Maulana Nizamuddin, one of those present, asked: "Is it correct to pledge allegiance 'in absentia' or not?" The Venerable Master replied: "I have not seen it written anywhere, nor does it stand to reason but, if a saintly person has mentioned it somewhere, then it would be sound."

He then enquired: "If someone cannot go to a saintly person for some reason or other but afterwards sends a request to him and he accepts him and sends him a cap and a prayer-mat, would this suffice to establish a master-disciple relationship?" He said: "If that spiritual man accepts him as a disciple then it would be so—absolutely on the former's part, and virtually on the latter's. Still there should be some precedent for such a situation."

Maulana Nizamuddin once again said: "The Apostle, in the absence of the Commander of the Faithful, Usman, accepted his allegiance. He clasped his own blessed hands together and said: 'This hand is on the part of Usman.' On this analogy it can be done." He replied: "This is one reason for saying it is lawful to accept allegiance from afar. In spite of this some precedent should be sought."

Again Maulana Nizamuddin said: "People talk about a guide by investiture; by allegiance and training; and by association.[1] Where do these distinctions come from?" He replied: "This saying has a foundation but it is not known what it is." Afterwards he explained: "It is like this. A guide by investiture is a person who has been approached by someone who is desirous of becoming his disciple. He gives him his hand and places a skull-cap on his head. This skull-cap is also a garment. This is known as a guide by investiture, and also by allegiance. Both are one and the same. A guide through training comes after a novice has undertaken to be the disciple of somebody and some

excusing factor crops up, either on his side or on that of his guide. On account of this factor the novice departs from his guide and goes to another guide who thereupon trains him. He points out his difficulties and defects and prescribes a remedy. While serving this guide he receives training. This is called 'a guide through training.' A guide by association consists only in his association with such a person. Namely by associating with the guide he corrects himself. He puts into practice what he sees his guide doing. This is known as 'a guide through association.' "

At this stage Maulana Nizamuddin said: "What difference is there between a guide 'through training' and one 'by association'?" He replied: "The guide who trains a novice is assiduous in telling him what he should do and what he should not do; while one who allows a novice to remain by his side does not undertake to train and look after him. The contrast is simply that, by being with him, the novice does what he sees him doing."

The Maulana again said: "Suppose there is a spiritual man who loves and has confidence in someone and, in accordance with that faith, benefits and spiritual wealth, on account of the blessing of his presence, descend upon him, and he understands that they have come to him on account of the blessing of the saintly man, and from his glance. Later on, he goes to some other spiritual person and becomes his disciple. Will there now appear any rupture in the benefits and spiritual wealth?" He replied: "No, there should not be any cessation. Whatever he had received from his former guide will remain with him."

"What about the question of his becoming the disciple of somebody else?" "All guides are agreed on this. They know that all are competent, one being as good as another, but there should be confidence in a particular guide's style of rule."

Again he asked: "Would there be any adverse effect by becoming the disciple of another guide?" He replied: "No, there would not be." He said: "After Maulana Fariduddin[2] had travelled much, seeking the saintly men of this group, and received some benefit from each one, he bound himself to Khwaja Quṭbuddin Bakhtiyar,[3] who said: 'Farid, you have come to me when your work has been completed.' "

3. He was also a famous Chishti saint (d. 1237), the disciple of Mu'inud-din Chishti.
4. This work, the first known treatise on Sufism written in Persian, was authored by Ali ibn Uthman Hujwiri (d. ca. 1071).
5. The 'Qutb' was the senior-most saint in the Sufi hierarchy at any particular time. Different groups often simultaneously claimed this honour for their own Sheikh.
6. There is no 'cutting corners' for Sharafuddin. For him the Law gives the norm of behaviour and this has to be observed scrupulously.
7. 'Himmat'—resolution, magnanimity, manfulness, steadfastness etc.—is a characteristic word used by Sharafuddin to indicate a most important 'set' of mind and heart on the part of the disciple.
8. 'Dar nafs-i imān'.
9. 'Imān āwurdan'.
10. This distinction could be of considerable interest to many in our conflict-ridden world.

Forty-Second Assembly

After breaking the fast one Ramzan evening, Qazi Ashrafuddin[1] asked: "Yogis have the power of flight. Can they use it to go from one place to another?" The Venerable Master replied: "They can, but not completely.[2] This is connected with self-struggle and asceticism. In this matter the faithful and infidels are equal.[3] A person's soul acquires strength to the extent that the burden of human nature departs from him. A quality is found in his soul by means of which the ability to fly is acquired, as also walking on water. All such things are of this meaning. Anyone, however, who still carries the weight of his human nature and enters the water will immediately sink. It is because of the weight of his nature that a person who is unable to walk upon water cannot do so." Afterwards he said: "In this affair monks are superior to yogis.[4] By virtue of their intense self-struggle and asceticism they attain a stage where they acquire illumination of their souls[5] so that some of them attain a certain lustre."

Sikandar asked: "What is this lustre?" He replied: "It is an awareness in their minds. Namely they are aware of what passes through another person's mind."

In connection with this explanation he mentioned that Shamsuddin Khwarazmi had told this story: "Once my father had gone somewhere on business. During this journey he reached a hill on which a hermit had made his dwelling. His solitude was so extreme that there was no path by which he could be reached. His arrangement for food was as follows. After some days he had need of food. Now there was a road at the foot of the hill along which merchants and similar people used to pass. He used to let down by rope a bucket from the hilltop to the road. The travellers who passed by that hill would then realize that there was a hermit living on the top of the hill and he was in need of food. They would put something in the bucket. He

would pull it up by means of the rope. He would eat whatever food or fruits were in the bucket. When my father reached the spot he had two companions with him. Suddenly they saw the bucket descending. My father said: 'That bucket belongs to the hermit. Let's give him something.' In the meantime one companion said: 'Let's give him poison!' As soon as he said this the hermit became aware of it and hauled up the bucket. Afterwards my father said to that companion: 'What have you done? You have let it go. Instead of poison we should have put food in it.' "

Again Sikander said: "If a person wants to undertake self-struggle and asceticism late in life, can he do so?" He replied: "How can he do so in old age? In his old age he has to make sure that he eats something, for old-age itself breaks his bones. What other form of struggle can he undertake? As the saying goes if, after forty years of age, someone enters upon this Way and desires to reach perfection, he cannot."[6]

In the meantime Qazi Mu'izzuddin said: "In some places it is related that so and so, after seventy years, was illuminated. What is the basis of this?" He replied: "It depends on the fact that he had attained constancy in self-struggle and austerity before forty years of age. That was how he was straightened out. He reached old age without any interior illumination. This occurred when he was seventy years old. It does not mean he began ascetical practices only when he was seventy. That was when he received illumination. Moreover I have not said it is impossible, only that it is not likely."

Qazi Ashrafuddin said: "As far as knowledge is concerned it is known that a person should undertake whatever struggle and asceticism he can, yet the gift which is bestowed upon a person is connected with the abandoning of food and drink." He replied: "If a person is in control of himself while eating and drinking—for that is the heart of the matter—he will attain all those things."

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. The manuscript evidence is for 'Ashrafuddin'.
2. The Persian is, 'walī tamām na'—whatever that is supposed to mean!

3. This acknowledged equality shows Sharafuddin's catholic outlook in an age that was unaccustomed to such breadth of heart and mind.
4. The reader may wonder how Sharafuddin made such a discovery. He gives his source—a 'story'.
5. 'Rūḥ'. It is the 'rūḥ', not the 'nafs' which acquires strength.
6. This is an observation which, along with its elucidation, most experienced spiritual guides would endorse.

Forty-Third Assembly

The Venerable Master said: "If the moon is seen on the 29th of the month, the feast would fall on Thursday; while if someone sees it clearly on 30th, it will fall on Friday. What is the difficulty if it falls on Friday? That Friday would be a twofold feast."

Afterwards he said: " 'Two feasts have occurred on the same day: the first is prophetic practice, the second obligatory.' The Friday practice is the lesser."[1]

Maulana Arif Zahid said: "Tonight is the 'Shab-i Qadr' (Night of Power). What is the origin of the practice of eating curds on this night?" He replied: "It is a practice that has cropped up. I have seen it written somewhere."[2] After that he said: "There are many such things. Whatever has become current among Muslims but they cannot discriminate, in their regard, between what is genuine and what is false, of a surety a tradition will finally be found concerning it.[3] If some matter of religion has become well known and famous among Muslims yet there is, in fact, nothing to prove its truth or falsity, it should not be prohibited, but one does not have to observe it. If someone does observe it, however, he should not be prohibited from doing so, because it has become widely practised among the Muslims. A person should, however, discriminate between what is true and what is false. If he simply goes ahead he might do something which is contrary to religion. This would be an innovation. On the other hand, if it is prohibited it could turn out to be correct and the prohibition would be incorrect for the simple reason that the person had not heard of the practice. It is difficult to prohibit such things. This much has to be observed: he should not observe such a practice which has become well-known and widespread among Muslims, with many Muslims observing it; but neither should he prohibited others from observing it. It is enough that he does not observe it himself, not that the genuine be distinguished from the false.

It can also be that there is a religious man in whom he has trust, being confident of his religion and religious practices, whom he sees observing it. Then he can do so himself, by way of imitation, but he should not prohibit it for the reason that it is widespread among the Muslims. The fact is that such a man can certainly discriminate between what is genuine and what is false, and he will have come across the practice somewhere, just as I have seen so many things in use among the Muslims.

Previously I had shown my disapproval, asking what basis there was for the practice. Afterwards a tradition concerning it was found. For example, it is common for women not to burn garlic or onion peelings in the house. Previously this seemed strange to me. What was the reason for their not doing so? At last, among the things from which poverty arises, I noticed that burning garlic and onion peelings induces poverty.

I also used to hear that one should not sit in the doorway. This also seemed strange to me. Where did it come from? Finally I noticed it too among the list of things that result in poverty.

I also used to hear that people should not sweep their houses at night. This also cropped up in a list of things that result in poverty."[1]

Afterwards he said: "Tonight there will be twelve rounds of prayer with three salaams. At each round, 'Praise be to God' is said once, and 'I have revealed it to you' three times, and 'Say, God is One' ten times. After finishing these, one hundred times 'Glory be to God'; 'There is no god but God'; 'God is Great'; 'There is no power or strength except in God' should be said."

In the meantime Samar said: "People also speak about a hundred rounds of prayer for tonight." He replied: "That pertains to 'Shab-i Barāt' (Night of Record). Thus it happens that people talk about a hundred rounds of prayer for tonight as well." Then he added: "There is a tradition which applies it to tonight as well. It is found in some places."

Afterwards he said: "The whole point is to make the night come alive by whatever means one can, whether by reciting

beads, by recitation of the Qur'an, by invoking blessings on the Prophet and his family, or by seeking forgiveness."[5]

The Helpless One said: "What is the most fitting of these so that a person might be preoccupied therein?" The Venerable Master replied: "The practice in which he finds inner serenity is the one he should preoccupy himself with. In this way he will realize for himself where his preference lies. Ritual prayer, however, is all-embracing. If he finds himself getting bored with something he should immediately leave it and occupy himself with something else for, once the heart loses interest in something, it is extremely difficult to bring it back to it. For that reason it has been said that it should be left immediately so that the heart won't seek to blame itself or be disturbed. A person should then leave that practice immediately and become engaged in another in order to be totally absorbed therein. He should abandon what he is engaged in if he becomes overstrained. If that happens let him emerge from private devotions and associate with his fellow men and talk with them for a while in order to obtain help and assistance from them, and let him occupy himself with something else."[6]

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. As the 'Shab-i Qadr' is celebrated on 27th Ramzan, this conversation occurred on 26th. There was a possibility of the feast at the end of Ramzan, 'Id ul-Fiṭr, being celebrated on Friday, if the new moon of Shawwal were not sighted until Thursday evening. That would mean the celebration of special 'Id prayers about 9 a.m. and the normal Friday congregational prayers at noon.

2. This type of statement from Sharafuddin is normally in the negative. In this instance, the manuscript evidence makes it affirmative.

3. Sharafuddin once again indicates his awareness of the genesis of many traditions.

4. It is interesting to notice how Sharafuddin has been forced to adapt himself to the prevalence of practices he himself could not observe—'Previously I had shown my disapproval'—ending up by 'noticing' that these forbidden practices were supposed to result in poverty. These very same practices are still observed in a number of Muslim households in Bihar.

5. People who are interested in meaningful spiritual exercises will find this point eminently sane.

6. This whole discussion has passed beyond the 'Night of Power' to devotions in general. Sharafuddin's introductory statement is quite sound: 'The practice in which he finds inner serenity is the one he should preoccupy himself with.' He is perfectly aware that some zealous young people can overdo their devotional practices, as his concluding remarks indicate.

Forty-Fourth Assembly

Qazi Ashrafuddin said: "If someone dreams that, on a fast day, all the Muslims are eating, what would that mean?" The Venerable Master replied: "This dream is interpreted as referring to back-biting, for this breaks the fast, in accordance with the tradition: 'There are many whose fasting does not extend beyond hunger and thirst,' which has also been interpreted as referring to back-biting."

Sheikh Mu'izzuddin enquired: "Does the *Iḥyā* accord merit to this night as to the 'Shab-i Qadr' (Night of Power)?" He replied: "Whoever spends the whole of this night in worshipping God Almighty will acquire the merit of a thousand months, or even more, as it has been said: 'The Night of Power is better than a thousand months,' but a thousand fixed months, as is found in the following story. There was an Israelite who fasted by day and also fought,[1] while he passed the night in vigil. In this manner a thousand months went by. Once it so happened that this story was mentioned in the assembly of the Apostle. The companions wanted an explanation, saying: 'What sort of an age do we have for becoming engrossed? We should have such an age as to be able to perform this type of worship.' In that assembly this chapter was revealed: 'If that Israelite passed a thousand months in worship and submission, what We have bestowed on you during the 'Shab-i Karāmat' (Night of Mercy)[2] exceeds that bestowed on that Israelite in a thousand months so that all who keep vigil on this night will receive more merit from Us than he received in a thousand months.' "

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. Fighting in a holy war is presumably meant, as the action is supposed to be highly meritorious. The example is totally unreal.
2. This is another name for 'Shab-i Qadr'. This is a Sufi tradition, not a Qur'anic verse.

Forty-Fifth Assembly

Maulana Latifuddin said: "In this connection it has been mentioned that, on the feast day,[1] there are two angels at the door of every believer to lead him to the feast-day prayer. They go along with him, one bearing a standard in each hand while the other carries a mace. What does it mean to say one carries a standard in each hand, and the other, a mace?" The Venerable Master replied: "The mace is on account of the devils. On this day they are made sport of and driven off. There are standards in the hand of the other to proclaim the greatness and wonders of the believers, just as by showing someone's standard it is clear that he is a valiant warrior."

Qazi Ashrafuddin said: "Here and there it is written that 'The reality of the existence[2] of the Apostle is a ray of the Divine Light[3]—to Whom be glory and exultation!' What is the meaning of this saying?" He replied: "By this ray they mean to say—but God knows best—that the coming into existence of the Apostle is from the existent being of the pure essence of God:[4] 'He is great and cannot be fragmented or diminished in any way,' just as the appearance within a mirror corresponds with the outside world."

Here he again said: "The existence of the world appeared from the being of the pure essence of God, so what is the reason for making this apply particularly to the Apostle?" He replied: "The coming into existence of the Apostle from the existent being of God occurs without intermediary; while the coming into existence of the world, although it occurs through the divine being, yet it is through the mediation of the Apostle, as I have explained.[5] A religious scholar wrote that all creatures originated from human souls, and the origin of these human souls is the pure soul of the Apostle, Muḥammad, as he said: 'The first creation of God is my soul.' It is not fitting to compare this to the tradition about light and other similar ones

because His creation is like a genealogical tree and the Khwaja (i.e. Muḥammad) is the fruit of that tree, and the tree is also genuinely from the seed of the fruit. Thus the first ray from the light of Unity[6] is the light of Muḥammad,[7] as he said: 'I am from God, and believers are from me.' "

Afterwards he added: "One should not ponder such matters with one's intellect. It becomes clear in the world of ecstatic contemplation."[8]

Later on he said: "Men of understanding, known as the protagonists of unity,[9] say that every particle of being that comes into existence is related to the existence of God in a similar fashion to the reflection in a mirror with the external form being reflected. This entire world which appears before us is like the reflection in a mirror which appears to exist but does not. This depends on the fact that real existence belongs to the Lord, who is self-existent. Other beings, however, even though they exist, do so through His creation.[10] Of themselves they are, in fact, nothing. The glance of the mystics penetrates everywhere. It falls firstly on that nothingness. As is mentioned here and there, 'nothing else exists'. That also is noticed and, as is said, 'Everything except Him perishes.' On the Day of Resurrection, all will be made clear. For the mystics, however, this illumination is granted today. All of this is what is meant by their 'glance'."

Maulana Latifuddin again enquired whether the saying, 'The sheikh vivifies and also causes death' had come to his notice. He replied: "No, I have not seen it anywhere, but I hear it from everyone. Moreover, if it is written somewhere, it could be explained."

Thereupon Maulana Latifuddin asked for the explanation. He replied: "The explanation would be that 'vivification' and 'causing death' have this meaning. The former refers to praiseworthy, angelic qualities. He causes them to appear in him, while the latter refers to evil qualities, namely he causes the death of the evil qualities of the novice. 'Vivification' and 'causing death' have this meaning.

This can be put in another way. The essence of life and death is of several kinds, e.g. 'Faith is life, while infidelity is

death; respectful submission to God is life, whereas sin is death; knowledge is life, but ignorance is death.' "

Afterwards he said: "There is a saying of Mansūr Hallāj[11] which has been preserved. It is quite formidable, and runs thus: 'I am smaller than He in two respects.' Even the hearing of this saying is something dreadful. The place where it is written contains no explanation concerning it but, in his books, which I have studied, an explanation is found. Now he has written in his own books that a traveller makes progress at every breath and each moment, and moves forward until he reaches the place where all the mystical meanings and words which are possible therein are acquired by him. He reaches the point where these two things remain, namely 'Our existence is from Him' and 'Our standing is in Him.' When Mansūr Hallāj said 'I am smaller than He,' he was thinking of these two things—but God knows best!"

Afterwards the Venerable Master said, with great astonishment: "From this one can understand what perfection had been acquired by him! Apart from these two things—that he does not exist by himself, nor does he stand by himself—all other things are there. The only difference lies in these two things."

At this stage Maulana Latifuddin said: "It is related that some dervishes had said about someone, 'Live' and he came to life: 'Die' and he died. What meaning does this bear?" He replied: "This bringing to life and causing death would be from God Almighty, but the miracle would apply in a special way to him through whom it was accomplished. The bringing to life and causing death, however, which applies particularly to the dervishes has a special meaning, as do all things with them."[12]

Afterwards he said: "The interpretation of this couplet is also made in this fashion:

At each breath, Sufis celebrate two feasts:
Spiders make strips of the flesh of flies.

In other words, at each breath the traveller emerges from reprehensible habits and enters into praiseworthy ones. Thus

they celebrate one feast, as the emergence from reprehensible habits is an occasion of joy, while there is also happiness when praiseworthy ones are acquired. The interpretation of the following hemistich of Maulana Rūm says the same thing:

Man is born but once, but I have often been born.

This means that, when he emerges from reprehensible habits a kind of birth occurs for him, because the birth of anything involves the emergence of another."

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. The feast in question is 'Id ul-Fiṭr, the feast of the breaking of the Ramzan fast.
2. 'Wujūd'.
3. 'Az partau-i nūr-i Ḥaqq ast'.
4. 'Az hastī-i wujūd-i dhāt-i pāk-i Ḥaqq ast'.
5. The reader also may be puzzled about where this 'explanation' is proffered.
6. 'Aḥadiyat'.
7. 'Nūr-i Muḥammad'. The scholar being noted is probably Ibn Arabi.
8. 'Mukāshafat'. The idea expressed in these two sentences is characteristic of Sharafuddin.
9. 'Ahl-i waḥdat'.
10. Sharafuddin is here introducing his—monotheistic—position in sharp contrast to the monistic position, of the 'protagonists of unity' which he has just outlined. The most explicit exposition of his monotheism—which is in complete harmony with that of the Qur'an—is found in the first of his *Hundred Letters*.
11. Mansūr Hallāj (d. 922) is the most famous Sufi martyr of Islam.
12. It is necessary to take serious note of this statement for, although Sharafuddin might not have been very critical in his approach to Sufi stories—all grist for the mill—he was deadly serious when it came to the hermeneutics involved in the proper interpretation of Sufi sayings and stories. This statement should warn us against an infantile literalness.

Forty-Sixth Assembly

It was the feast day. In the congregation presided over by the Qazi at the place for feast-day prayers, a scholar said: "The offering of auxiliary prayers at this place before the official ones is not proper."[1] Yet this tradition is current concerning prayer in a mosque: 'When you enter a mosque, perform two prostrations of prayer.' Hence it is that one should immediately on arriving at the festal carpet offer two cycles of formal prayer. The scholars discussed this point. Finally the prayer-leader rose up to lead the feast-day prayer.

When the prayer was over the Master returned to his own blessed residence and sat down. The scholars of the city all came crowding in together and sat down. Before the festal meal the Venerable Master said: "I heard that, in the Qazi's congregation, a discussion arose and one of the scholars asked which path you entered by—quarreling, prohibiting, or opposing? Now what need was there for all that talking and listening? The answer is found in the following tradition: 'When you enter a mosque, perform two prostrations of prayer.' A place for feast-day prayer is not a mosque.[2] It is not 'entered'. Besides, nobody calls this place a 'mosque'. It is not regulated by the rules for mosques, except for one hour on the two major feast days. One of the rules is to line up correctly without crowding the rows together,[3] and the others are to be observed."

Those present in the assembly bowed to the earth, saying: "That is the way it is. The answer has been given by the Venerable Master."

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. 'Makrūh ast'. (This whole assembly is found in AC & D, but not in E, while B is incomplete).

2. There is usually a large area, sometimes enclosed by a very low wall, with a higher one on the side facing Mecca. It is used only on the two main feast days when all the men of a town gather for the special 'Id prayers. The place is called an 'idgāh' not a 'mosque'.

3. The reference is to the rows of worshippers.

Forty-Seventh Assembly

There was the felicity of an assembly after the evening prayer. After the meal the Helpless One said: "It is written in a certain place that, if somebody says, 'I do not want Paradise: I want to see You,' he becomes an infidel. Why would this be infidelity?" The Venerable Master replied: "Paradise has been ordained for believers by the Lord, just as hell has been ordained for the infidels. If somebody says, 'I do not want Paradise,' implied in this is the rejection of the Law, and infidelity consists in rejecting and denying the Law."

Afterwards he said: "When a command which has been established on the basis of the Book or the practice of the Prophet is denied or rejected by anybody, in word or deed, the person becomes an infidel. Now infidelity necessarily comes in. The reason is because it necessarily implied the rejection or denial of the Book and the practice of the Prophet. That involves infidelity. It is also involved when something is held as unlawful[1] on the basis of the Book or the practice of the Prophet, because the legality or unlawfulness of something needs to be proved absolutely. In the meantime, if somebody thinks it is lawful, infidelity necessarily arises. The reason for this—i.e. considering the thing as lawful is itself unlawful—is that the text of the Qur'an or the practice of the Prophet is denied. Similarly, all taking as lawful what is not, and vice versa, implies infidelity for the reason I gave."

The Helpless One said: "In the writings of the sheikhs the following words are found in various places: 'I have not desired Paradise: I have desired You.' What meaning do they contain?" He replied: "To begin with, the import of this interpretation has not come down from anybody. If it had, it would have come from his own boldness.[2] It does not mean he is no longer obedient. It is a condition of humble submission. It has been mentioned that they were obedient. What they have written

displays their intrepidity, not the rejection of the command.[3] Where it is written that Paradise was sought it is also mentioned that the precondition of humble submission has to be met. Paradise does not depend on their intrepidity! The intention is different: it pertains to the world of love. There one speaks of the lover and the Beloved. No intellect can enter therein. The externalist scholars are at loggerheads with this Sufi group,[4] affirming that there is no wine in either world—but God knows best!"

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. 'Ḥurmat'.

2. Sharafuddin is obviously presenting his own opinion—quite clear from his *Hundred Letters*—about his supreme desire, nothing less than the vision of God Himself. He has little time for the pleasures of paradise. His position—based on personal conviction, 'himmat' i.e. boldness, intrepidity—is not acceptable to all. He is at pains to show that it does not contradict the Qur'anic promises, which he never denies.

3. There are difficulties in the various manuscripts here.

4. We have already noticed that Sharafuddin's opinion is different from that of many others and that it depends very much on his own deep experience of God. This statement merely affirms what the text itself proclaims.

Index

Books cited

'Aqīda, 67, 68
Dictionary of Islam, 83
Ganj-i lā Yakhfā, 35, 49
Hidāya, 16, 19, 22, 122
Iḥyā-i 'Ulūm, 59, 160
'Iṣmat ul-Anbiyā, 91
Jawāhir, 16
Kanz ul-Masā'il, 15
Kashf ul-Mahjūb, 150
Ma'dan ul-Ma'ānī, 1, 22, 131, 146
Mashāriq, 144, 145
Mishkāt, 122
Pazhdavī, 19, 22
Qur'an, 11, 12, 18, 20, 42, 48, 49, 62, 80, 83, 105, 109, 119, 123, 137, 158, 164, 167; quotes: 2:18, 133; 2:40, 130; 5:6, 31; 12:9, 84; 12:22, 65; 12:92, 85; 12:93, 70; 12:94, 69; 12:100, 85; 17:1, 71; 20:17, 74; 20:18, 75; 20:19-20, 75, 76; 20:21, 76; 20:24, 73; 20:32, 73; 20:24, 73; 20:32, 73; 20;44, 73; 20:46, 73; 20:71, 76; 20:72, 76; 22:70, 76; 26:50, 76; 28:24, 78; 32:18, 141; 38:78, 130; 48:27, 93; 53:20, 103; 59:14, 55; 71:25, 72; 99:7-8, 48
Qūt ul-Qulūb, 121, 122
Siyar ul-Auliyā, 147
Tafsīr-i Kabīr, 137
Tafsīr-i Zāhid, 75, 137
Tamhīdāt, 96
Targhīb uṣ-Salāt, 16
The Hundred Letters, 29, 63, 107, 164, 168
The Two Hundred Letters, 120
Wafāt Nāma, 48

Persian quoted

Ahl-i Wahdat, 164
A'rāf, 116, 117
Baqā, 93, 108
Bashariyat, 14
Dīn, 28, 83
Fanā, 93, 108
Farz, 21, 22
Fātiha, 41, 119
Fiqh, 113
Ghulām, 116
Himmat, 152, 168
'Id uḷ-Fiṭr, 158, 164
Ikhlās, 63
Ilhām, 22
Imān, 117, 152
Irādat, 93
Jān, 52
Ka'ba, 12
Kāmil, 29
Kashf, 107
Khānqāh, 14, 59
Madhhab, 120
Malfūz, 131
Mansūkh, 83
Ma'rifat, 29
Mashiyat, 29, 52, 93
Mukāshifat, 164
Mushrikān, 116
Nafs, 49, 51, 136, 152, 155
Nāsikh, 83
Nāsūt, 14
Nūr-i Muhammadī, 164
Quṭb, 152
Rūh, 51, 52, 136, 155

Sha'ban, 93
Shab-i Barāt, 91, 157
Shab-i Karāmat, 160
Shab-i Qadr, 156, 158, 160
Shawwāl, 158
Shi'ah, 89
Shirk, 86
Taqwā, 97
Tauhīd, 48
'Urs, 146
Wahy, 94
Wājib, 11
Wujūd, 164

Persons mentioned

Abraham, 98
Abu Bakr, 43
Abu Hanifa, 16, 21, 120, 124
Abu Sa'id Abul-Khair, 9
Abu Talib Makki, 121, 124
Abu Yazid, 27
Adam, 111, 127
Ahmad, Sheikh, 50
Ahmad Surkh, 12
Ain ul-Quzat, 6, 53, 96, 97, 127, 132
Aisha, 88, 89
Alauddin, 14, 17
Ali, 37, 87, 88, 89, 90, 114
Ali, Burhanuddin, 22
Angel of Death, 3, 4, 91, 92
Angels, 12, 59, 67, 91
Apostle (i.e. Muhammad), 3, 9, 15, 19, 20, 35, 43, 48, 55, 67, 83, 93, 98, 99, 104, 122, 140, 148, 160, 161
Ashrafuddin, Qazi, 9, 12, 15, 39, 40, 41, 54, 61, 62, 70, 130, 152, 154, 160, 161
Asiya, 4, 5, 6
Attar, 100
Auhaduddin, Sayyid, 111, 112, 143, 146
Badruddin, Maulana, 144, 145
Badruddin, Qazi, 137
Bakhtiyar, Qutbuddin, 149
Balkhi, Amir, Fazil, 105, 108
Buzurg, Amir, 143
Caliph, 13
Chishti, Abu Ishaq, 60
Chishti, Mu'inuddin, 131, 152
Chishti. Sheikh Maudud, 58, 60
Chishti, Sheikh Zada, 57, 60
David, 141
Devil, The, (cf. Satan), 85
Devils, 4, 161
Dinār, Malik-i, 99
Enoch, 4
Farīduddīn, Ganj-i Shakar, 149, 151
Farīduddīn, Malik, 14
Firdausi, Imaduddin, 143
Firdausi, Najibuddin, 111, 112, 123, 143
Gabriel, 20, 80, 89
Ghalbak, 3, 7
Ghazzali, Ahmad, 12, 13
God, cf. passium
Haji Abu Sa'id, 24
Hallaj, Mansūr, 163
Hanbal, Ahmad, 105, 108, 120
Hasan, 89
Haruni, Usman, 125, 126
Hughes, 83
Hujwiri, Ali ibn Uthman, 152
Husain, 87, 88, 89
Husamuddin, Maulana, 91, 116, 132, 134, 135
Idris, 4
Iwaz, Khwaja Mahmud, 105, 125
Jacob, 69, 70, 71, 85
Jalaluddin Mahjub, 57
Jesus, 4, 7
Joseph, 68, 69, 70, 71, 84, 85, 86
Junaid, Imam, 27
Jyuri, Sayyid Alauddin, 143, 144, 145
Karimuddin, Maulana, 16, 17, 20, 22, 72, 73, 74, 80, 142, 143
Khadijah, 141
Khalilullah, 98
Khan, Haibat, 116, 132
Khan, Qazi, 53, 115, 137
Khan, Qutlugh, 21
Khizr, 109, 139, 141

Khurd, Amir, 143, 146
Khwarazmi, Shamsuddin, 153
Latifuddin, Maulana, 161, 162, 163
Malik, Imam, 118, 120
Mary, 4, 7
Maryam, 121
Messenger, (i.e. Muhammad), 9, 23, 28
Minhajuddin, Qazi, 114, 130
Moses, 5, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 96, 97
Mu'āwiya, 87, 88, 89, 90
Muhammad, 1, 28, 47, 57, 87, 89, 98, 140, 141, 161, 162
Muhammad, Imam, 17
Mu'inuddin, Qazi, 137
Mu'inuddin, Sanjari, 125, 126
Mu'izz Balkhi, 35
Mu'izzuddin, Qazi, 154
Mu'izzuddin, Sheikh, 9, 10, 18, 21, 51, 54, 55, 65, 67, 73, 75, 78, 82, 95, 98, 109, 118, 119, 160
Multani, Khwaja Mamman, 57
Muzaffar Shams Balkhi, 49
Nakir, 57
Nasiruddin, Maulana, 37
Nasrullah, Qazi, 31
Nizamuddin Auliya (also, Badayuni), 107, 108, 125, 131, 143, 144, 145, 147
Nizamuddin, Maulana, 148, 149, 150
Nizamuddin, Sheikh, 143
Pharaoh 4, 5, 72, 73, 74, 76, 77
Prophet (i.e. Muhammad), 9, 48, 59, 62, 67, 80, 82, 83, 87, 98, 102, 103, 104, 109, 111, 121, 122, 123, 126, 140, 141, 142, 158, 167,
Prophets, 68, 71, 84, 93, 96, 98, 140, 141
Qazi, Imam Yusuf, 122
Qeyamuddin, Maulana, 142
Rāzi, Fakhruddin, 141
Ruknuddin, Sheikh, 143, 144
Rūm, Maulana, 164
Rustum, Sheikh, 124, 129
Sa'di, 45, 89, 128, 130
Sadruddin, Maulana, 120
Sadruddin, Sheikh, 55, 56
Safi, Qazi, 37
Sanai, 5
Satan, 26, 103, 104, 127, 128, 129
Shadi, Amir, 21
Shafi'i, Imam, 92, 93, 94, 120
Shah, Qazi, 12
Shamsuddin Firuz Shah, 21
Sharafuddin, 14
Sharafuddin, Sayyid, 144, 145, 147
Shibli, 129
Shu'aib, 77
Sikandar, 153, 154
Solomon, 3, 4, 140
Sunami, Ziauddin, 22
Tajuddin, 105
Tau'ama, Sharafuddin, 18, 22, 108
Tughluq, Ghiyasuddin, 21
Tughluq, Muhammad bin, 22
Uchcha, Sheikh Zada, 98
Uriah, 141
Usman, 148
Wahiduddin, Maulana, 107, 130 134
Wahiduddin, Sheikh, 125
Yahya, Maulana Shamsuddin, 137, 138
Yazīd, 87, 88, 89
Zahid, Arif, 156
Zahid, Imam, 84, 130, 137, 138, 139, 141
Zahid, Kamaluddin, 147
Zahiruddin, Khwaja, 170
Zaid, 139, 140, 141
Zainab, 139, 140
Zain Badr Arabi, (cf. The Helpless One), passim
Zakariya, Bahauddin, 56

Places referred to

Afghanistan 56
Arwal, 137, 141
Baghdad, 12, 13, 138, 141
Bengal, 33, 105
Bihar 19, 40, 59, 60, 141, 144, 145
Bukhara, 16, 17, 106
Bulghar, 106, 108

Cairo, 93
Can'aan, 69, 85
Chisht, 57, 58, 60
Delhi, 55, 143, 144
Egypt, 69, 85
Ghiyaspur, 143, 144
Harv, 57, 60
Hindustan, 19, 60
Jerusalem, 13
Ka'ba, 12
Karbala, 88, 89
Khuda Bakhsh Library, 14
Kufa, 88
Lakhnauti, 144, 147
Makhdum Kund, 59
Mecca, 88, 166
Medina, 88, 93
Midian, 77, 78
Multan, 55, 59
Rajgir, 59
Sonargaon, 17, 22, 120
Wasit, 13

Terms etc.

Abrogation, 83
Alms-giving, 40
Analogy, 72, 106, 148
Apostolic, 10, 11
Arabic, 113, 137, 138, 141
Ascent, Night of, 67, 122, 126
Ascetic, 27, 153
Association, 45, 148, 149
Austerity, 51, 124
Believer, 50, 51, 92, 115, 167
Blame, 27, 107, 129
Blessing, 41, 45, 46, 114, 130, 150
Body, 50
Book, The (i.e. Qur'an), 18, 19, 20, 21, 72, 151, 167
Catholic, 7, 52
Cause, 29
Chastity, 5
Command, 31, 47, 50, 51, 76, 89, 91, 95, 101, 116, 127, 133, 168
Commitment, 28
Companions, 87, 88, 103, 104, 121, 160
Consolation, 28
Death, 3, 50, 92, 113, 162, 163
Defect, 28
Dervish, 12, 14, 55
Discernment, 32
Disciple, 30, 32, 58, 93, 101, 102, 133, 134, 138, 148, 149, 150
Divorce, 140
Dream, 53, 54, 55, 99, 103, 104, 105, 160
Ecstasy, 35
Experience, 30, 126
External, 31, 78, 79, 82, 162
Faith, 13, 26, 28, 29, 30, 48, 73, 79, 83, 95, 96, 97, 101, 102, 109, 116, 137, 151, 162
Fasting, 39, 40, 57, 61, 82, 109, 121, 151, 160
Fault, 27, 68, 96
Feast Day, 143, 144, 146, 156, 161, 164, 165
Forgetfulness, 34, 35
Gift, 96, 97, 113
Grace, 1, 7, 30
Great Imam (i.e. Abu Hanifa), 16, 118
Guide, Spiritual (cf. Sheikh), 15, 22, 32, 58, 127, 132, 133, 134, 136, 148, 149, 150, 151, 155
Habits, 163, 164
Heart, 27, 28, 34, 41, 44, 45, 55, 116, 120, 121, 123, 124, 125, 127, 140, 155, 158
Heaven (cf. Paradise), 4, 5
Hell, 72, 80, 115, 116
Helpless one, (i.e. Zain Badr Arabi), cf. passim.
Hermit, 153
Hidden, 26, 33, 44, 91, 132, 150
Hindu, 46
Holiness, 101
Hospice, (cf. Khānqāh), 13, 144, 145
Humility, 33, 34, 35
Idol, 103, 126, 141
Illumination, 46, 103, 124, 153, 154
Imitation, 9
Infidel, 7, 27, 50, 51, 55, 73, 80, 91,

103, 115, 141, 153
Infidelity, 6, 15, 72, 162, 167
Innovation, 10, 11
Insight, 28, 32, 132
Inspiration, 20, 84, 102, 103
Intellect, 65, 66, 84, 162, 168
Intention, 39, 41, 42, 59, 86, 91, 93, 98, 127, 142, 168
Intercession, 59, 74, 80, 103
Internal, 31, 78, 79, 82
Intimate converse, 34, 35
Islam, 18, 40, 79, 89, 96, 104, 116
Judgement, Day of, 80, 93, 105, 130
Jurisconsult, 19, 22, 48
Jurisprudence, 21, 22, 33
Knowledge, 7, 26, 29, 46, 50, 51, 92, 102, 132, 143, 154, 163
Lat, al, 103
Law, 10, 11, 17, 21, 35, 37, 38, 39, 40, 47, 64, 70, 82, 88, 93, 95, 97, 102, 116, 118, 119, 139, 150, 150, 167
Lawful, 10, 13, 28, 44, 77, 82, 97, 101, 135, 167
Life, 7, 36, 48, 118, 162, 163
Limbo, 115, 116, 117
Love, 24, 27, 29, 30, 39, 70, 87, 98, 114, 127, 128, 129, 130, 139, 140, 146, 168
Madrasa, 13
Manat, 103,
Manifestation, 50, 104, 107
Marriage, 113, 115, 116
Meditation, 61, 62, 109, 110
Mercy, 1, 98, 129, 130, 160
Merit, 40, 63
Miracle, 101, 102
Monks, 153
Mosque, 15, 16, 47, 106, 165, 166
Muharram, 89
Munkir, 57
Musical sessions, 35, 36
Muslim, 16, 17, 27, 46, 57, 59, 72, 88, 89, 124, 156, 157
Mystic, 52, 96, 162
Novice (cf, disciple), 28, 128, 139, 148, 149, 162
Obligation, 10, 11, 39, 95, 101, 107, 133, 134, 135, 150, 151, 156
Opinion, 115, 118, 119
Pain, 23, 24, 28, 29, 144
Paradise, 6, 67, 80, 90, 102, 115, 106, 128, 167, 168
Path (cf. Way), 31, 34, 35, 39, 53, 63, 150, 165
Perfection, 61, 62
Persian, 138, 141
Pilgrimage, 40
Platonic, 52
Poverty, 157, 158
Power, 12, 31, 51, 122, 126, 127, 156, 160
Praise, 27, 28
Prayer, 33, 35, 39, 40, 57, 61, 118, 119, 120, 121, 122, 126, 157, 165, 167; funeral, 151; -leaders, 35, 36, 37, 116, 119; -mat, 16, 21, 33, 58, 148; ritual, 9, 11, 34, 35, 61, 62, 65, 97, 109, 158
Predestined, 26
Pride, 29
Prohibition, 10, 113, 116, 156
Purification, 24
Purity, 16, 28, 119
Qualities, 12, 46, 47, 53, 54, 63, 132, 162
Rajab, 121
Ramzan, 106, 107, 151, 153, 158, 164
Reality, 54
Religion, 1, 23, 28, 52, 116, 117, 119, 134, 156, 157
Repentance, 37, 68, 86, 87
Resurrection, Day of, 6, 44, 72, 139, 162
Retreat, Forty-day, 12, 13
Revelation, 20, 22, 23, 55, 88, 102, 116
Rite, 118, 119, 120
Sage, 13, 14, 45, 77, 137
Saint, 7, 20, 41, 43, 101, 102, 120, 132
Scholars, 45, 161, 165, 168
Seclusion, 106, 107
Service, 22, 39, 40, 47, 115, 146

Sheikh (cf. Guide, Spiritual), 9, 10, 55, 119, 121, 143, 167
Signs, 1, 74, 103, 104
Sin, 37, 71, 84, 86, 123, 163
Skull-cap, 148
Slave-girl, 115
Sorrow, 44, 45
Soul, 27, 28, 41, 47, 50, 51, 52, 72, 78, 104, 114, 124, 132, 133, 153, 161
Stage, 12, 27, 31, 61, 98
State, 24, 31, 34, 35, 97
Struggle, 39, 51
Submission, 33, 34, 35, 167, 168
Sufi, 6, 99, 109, 131, 132, 160, 163, 164, 168
Supererogatory, 150, 151
Tablet, 91
Tavern, 34
Theologians, 13, 62, 93, 111, 114, 115, 119
Tradition, 8, 11, 15, 18, 19, 20, 37, 72, 79, 87, 102, 105, 106, 107, 111, 122, 123, 124, 134, 135, 142, 157, 160, 16, 165
Tranquillity, 1, 24, 25, 29
Traveller, 39, 89, 132, 163
Trust, 26, 29
Union, 68, 125, 126, 132
'Uzza, al, 103
Venerable Master, (i.e, Sharafuddin), cf. passim
Vision, 62, 80, 81, 85, 105, 132, 168
Vow, 13
War, Holy, 151
Way (cf. Path), 7, 28, 29, 129, 154
Will, 29, 50, 91, 92, 93, 133
Wine, 18
Work, 95
World, 12, 23, 46, 50, 101, 115, 126, 126, 142
Worship, 39, 41, 61, 62, 109, 118, 124, 160
Worshipper, 27, 126
Yogis, 153

Errata

Page	Line	Incorrect	Correct
24	17	Helpless groanig	Helpless groaning
29	3 (note 12)	infomed	informed
84	24	is what	in what
90	1 (note 1)	ironic	irenic